

THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE.

Contents for March, 1925.

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All MSS. should be typewritten, and addressed to The Editor, "The Dublin Magazine," 7-9 Commercial Buildings, Dame Street, Dublin.

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To Readers of

The Dublin Magazine.

7-9 COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS,
DUBLIN, 1st February, 1925.

A representative Committee has been formed with a view to the formation of a Company to be called the DUBLIN PUBLISHERS, LIMITED, for the acquirement and publication of THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE.

With the MAGAZINE you are, no doubt, familiar, as it has achieved for itself a distinctive place in the list of current periodicals. The Magazine was first published in August, 1923, and since that date has been under the Editorship of Mr. Seumas O'Sullivan, whose poetic work is known throughout the English-speaking world. In its pages will be found all that is best in Irish thought, and its list of contributors includes the names of all the best-known Irish writers and artists. The MAGAZINE is, in fact, Ireland's only contemporary effort to hold its own in the artistic world.

During the eighteen months of its existence the MAGAZINE has been conducted as a private venture, but it is felt that the time is now opportune to place it upon a broader and more secure financial basis. For this purpose a Company is being formed which confidently appeals for your support.

The Ordinary Capital of the Company, £1,000, will be made up of 1,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each, and the Directors trust that you may see your way to make an investment in its Funds. Given adequate financial support it is certain that the Company can achieve the same measure of commercial success that the MAGAZINE has achieved in the literary and artistic spheres.

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ANDREW E. MALONE,
Secretary Organising Committee.

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A CONFIRMED WRITER OF MEMOIRS AT WORK.

By
WILL. DYSON.

"My first meeting with his Lordship was informal to a degree . . . One day . . . opening his door in his impulsive way, he found me with my ear 'glued,' as the saying is, to his keyhole! Of course, I explained who I was, and the incident passed off with only a modicum of embarrassment to either of us. In fact, his Lordship laughed quite heartily at the contretemps."

From "Gleanings Among the Great." Anon. Blump and Guffie 15s

THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE.

Edited by SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.

Vol. II.

MARCH, 1925.

No. 8.

Notes of the Month.

A sale of books and manuscripts, formerly possessed by the Fanshawe family, at Sotheby's in July last, has revived interest in Sir Richard Fanshawe (1606-66) a poet, translator, and ambassador, and his wife, the author of a charming book of memoirs, first published in 1829. Fanshawe produced a famous version of the Fourth Book of the *Aeneid*, which has this year been reprinted, after a lapse of two centuries. It is edited by Mr. A. L. Irvine, of the Charterhouse (Basil Blackwood, 6s.), who recalls in an Appendix the memory of another old scholar, Dr. Henry, an Irishman, who died in 1876, after a life largely devoted to Virgilian studies. In his notes to the Fanshawe edition, Mr. Irvine constantly refers to Henry's *Aeneidea*: "a book unique among classical commentaries . . . and also an expensive rarity." Henry practised as a doctor in Dalkey until his fiftieth year, when a legacy left him free to indulge his passion for Virgil, and he spent twenty-five years travelling over Europe, visiting libraries and making the acquaintance of Virgilian scholars. Henry printed a small portion of his work during his lifetime; the rest appeared in fragments after his death. His *Aeneidea* ran to 3,000 pages, and required a knowledge of seven languages; the index of authors quoted covers 75 pages, and contains over 7,000 references. The late Provost Mahaffy, who was Henry's friend, spoke of "his long white locks, somewhat fantastic fur dress . . . and his great beauty and vivacity of countenance."

* * * * *

Vincenzo Bucci publishes in the *Corriere della Sera* of Milan a most interesting article on the preservation of Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" in the refectory of S. Maria delle Grazie. He describes Oreste Silvestri at his work, the man who is now the doctor in attendance on this masterpiece. Thirty years ago, when the death of the painting seemed imminent, d'Annunzio wrote the poem "*Peu la Morte d'un Capolavoro*—The mirror of the Ideal, O Poets, the measure of the Heroes, the summit of Art, the vertex of Thought and of Mystery, the visible sign of the Immortal, dies, O Poets, and is no more. . . . Humiliated is the Universe." Fourteen years later Cavenaghi was put in charge of the picture, and, after many centuries of incautious "restoration" (as early as 1517 signs of decay were evident), it began to look better.

* * * * *

Cavenaghi worked secretly, his successor may be seen at work. "High up on a plank Silvestri sounds the wall with a light touch of the finger, scrutinises

it in the light of a vivid lamp, caresses it with strange tools." Cavenaghi had got rid of the damp which was caused by the great difference, during the winter season, between the temperature in the refectory and that in the room behind it. The other trouble was due to the fact that Leonardo painted the picture in oils, without preparing the surface by the processes usual in fresco-work. Silvestri's operation is a very minute and patient one. A breath of air, to-day or to-morrow, the lightest shock, and the precious impressions of Leonardo's brush will fall. It is necessary, therefore, to re-attach them tightly to the plastering. He inserts the needle of a syringe between the thin strata and the wall, and ejects from it an essence of petrol which, by diffusing, saturates a large portion of the painted surface and renders it, by capillarity, suited to absorb a second injection of the moist resin. The pliant and elastic substance restores the adhesive quality of the crust that is in danger. Later on the prepared portion is heated by electricity; it is then ironed, and the bright polish of the varnish is sponged off. No one can give back to the picture the life that Leonardo infused into it; but it is now known that *The "Last Supper"* can be preserved indefinitely.

* * * * *

If the plays produced by University Dramatic Societies be indicative of the state of Drama in universities it will be said that the Drama in Dublin University is in a very sad state indeed. Oxford University Dramatic Society stages Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*; Birmingham students present *Boris Godounov*; Dublin University Dramatic Society is content with Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* and Milne's *Belinda*. Neither of these plays is worthy of a University Dramatic Society. *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* is Shaw's; it is most certainly not Shaw at his best. Milne's *Belinda* is beneath serious notice, and why it should have been chosen by the Dramatic Society of an ancient, and an Irish, University passes comprehension. Milne does not write plays, he compounds digestives and sedatives for the overfed. His feeble jokes in a blasé setting have no relevance to Dublin—if they be relevant anywhere, which is doubtful. Shaw in Dublin, yes! But Milne! There is nothing to say, it is left only to us to lament lost opportunity. *Heartbreak House*, *Back to Methuselah*, *Saint Joan*, all await presentation in Dublin. There are many Irish authors from whose work plays might have been selected, and there are hundreds of fine plays by Continental dramatists which have never been staged in Dublin. And Dublin University Dramatic Society selected *Belinda* from the lot! It might have been worse—they might have selected *The Boy Comes Home*. To the Dublin University Dramatic Society drama evidently is but the opportunity for Gala Nights—the play's certainly *not* the thing.

* * * * *

Last year the Dublin University did even worse—they presented *Pinkerton's Peerage* and *The Man from Blankley's*. Five years ago the Society presented *David Garrick*, and since then it has presented nothing worthy of a University Dramatic Society. Shaw has been discovered this year, and now that he has been discovered, those who select the plays for the Society might keep their eyes upon him. If they do they will discover something better than *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, and they will probably forget that A. A. Milne exists. They will discover that Mr. Pim passed by long since. The productions of the Society during the past five years suggest the necessity for some change in the method of selecting the plays for presentation. During that time the plays produced were worthy only of a third-rate touring company. To associate

them with an ancient University was not to ennoble the plays, but rather to debase the University. Neither of the Universities in Dublin seems to take Drama seriously, but the National University, at least, need not live down *Pinkerton's Peerage*. Perhaps the students of the National University might be induced to form a Dramatic Society which will deal with Drama? The failure of Dublin University Dramatic Society to select plays worthy of production is made all the more glaring by the excellent acting ability at its disposal. The Society has in its membership acting capacity of the highest class, and tears were almost induced by the ability of Miss Phyllis Wakely being wasted on Belinda Tremayne when she might have been playing Goldsmith, Sheridan, or Shakespeare.

* * * * *

The death of Dr. George Sigerson removes from Dublin and from Ireland not a prominent figure only, but a truly great and noble man. His entire life was spent in the service of his country and its people, and his record of patriotic endeavour is large enough to fill the lives of many ordinary men. Literature, science, art, medicine, and politics, in all he shone, but he shone least in politics. Looking at the man it was difficult to realise that he was more than ninety years old, yet more than fifty years have passed since he published his *History of Land Tenure in Ireland*. That book made history during the second half of the nineteenth century in Ireland, and it may make history yet elsewhere. But his great work for literature was done in the National Literary Society, and in his great book, *Bards of the Gaedhal and the Ghall*. Since the publication of that book much has been done to make ancient Irish poetry better known, and to Dr. Sigerson is due the praise of the pioneer. Only a few years ago he published *The Saga of King Lir*, a poem of great power. In the scientific world his place was prominent. He was beloved by his patients and revered by his students at the National University where he filled the Chair of Biology with great distinction. The words he used when he unveiled the bust of James Clarence Mangan in Stephen's Green Park may well be used to describe himself and his own unselfishly patriotic devotion: "Against the dark background of his life he raised a fair fabric of sweet poetry, golden apples amidst a silver foliage, for the glory of his own people and the admiration of all nations." In our April issue we hope to deal more fully with the man and his work.

* * * * *

It is with the utmost regret that we record the death of Jacques Rivière (1886-1925), the Directeur of *La Nouvelle Revue française*, and the most noteworthy of contemporary French critics. Becoming Secretary in 1912 and Directeur in 1919 of the *Nouvelle Revue française*, in succession to M. André Gide, he made it the chief organ of the psychological movement in French literature, and himself wrote one of the outstanding psychological novels of to-day, *Aimée*, which takes its place in the succession of *La Princesse de Clèves*, *Adolphe*, and *Dominique* as one of the great achievements of our time in unromantic and entirely sincere study of the psychology of love. Rivière's volume of *Études*, comprising studies of Baudelaire, Claudel, Gide, and a number of musicians and painters, including Bach, Franck, Moussourgsky, Debussy, Cézanne, Gauguin, and others, is, perhaps, the most essential critical volume of our generation. It is to be hoped that his essays on *La Sincérité envers soi-même*, *La Foi*, *La Solitude*, and *La Roman d'aventure*, which appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue française* from time to time will be collected in volume form and made generally accessible.

Irish books are prominent in the Spring Lists of the leading London publishers. So many books by Irish writers are announced that the failure of Irish publishing is difficult to understand. The list issued by Messrs. Macmillan alone contains five new books by Irish writers in addition to several new editions of books previously published. Outstanding in the list is *The History of the Irish State to 1014*, by that greatest of our historians, Mrs. Alice Stopford Green. In this book Mrs. Green has reconstructed the history of Ireland to the death of Brian Boru at Clontarf. In her preface she says: "I have not attempted to write a political history of the period, but simply to give a clear notion of the social and organised life of the Irish, their national character, culture and laws." A new edition of that epoch-making book, *The Making of Ireland and its Undoing*, has also just been published. In this list also are Sean O'Casey's two plays, reviewed elsewhere in this issue, and *The Golden Treasury of Irish Verse*, selected and arranged by Lennox Robinson. Then there is a new novel by S. R. Lysaght, author of *Her Majesty's Rebels*, entitled *My Tower in Desmond*, which is described as "a picture of Irish national life during the last thirty or forty years." Denis Gwynn figures in the list with a book on *The Catholic Reaction in France*, about which little is known outside France. His book will be welcomed if only because it is the only volume of its kind in French or English. It will also be welcomed because its author knows his subject and writes vividly and lucidly. The fifth volume of W. B. Yeats' *Collected Works, Early Poems and Stories*, is also announced. Altogether it is a splendid Irish list.

Poetry :

THREE POEMS By MONK GIBBON.

I Tell Her She is Lovely.

I tell her she is lovely, and she laughs,
Shy laughter altogether lovely too,
Knowing, perhaps, that it was true before,
And, when she laughs, that it is still more true.

In Exile.

Who would have thought a little field
A patch of green where skies are wide,
A steep lane up a valley, and
Smoke curling upwards from beside
Five lonely trees in that steep part,
Could stir such sadness in the heart ?

Who would have thought a little field,
A far-off road, a far-off lane,
A far-off cottage, could in time
Wake far-off thoughts with so much pain ;
Wake far-off thoughts so hard to stem,
A man might fear to think of them ?

Remorse.

I might have been a poet still,
I might be singing carelessly,
Had someone not come up one day
And sown philosophy

Within my heart—a little seed,
Too small you'd think to do much wrong,
And yet it grew till presently
It came to stifle song :

Casting so long a shadow on
The grass, where poets like to sing,
That even love, that seemed so sweet,
Became a foolish thing.

And all those happy empty thoughts
That leap to life when one is young
Were turned to folly on my lips
Before they could be sung.

And though a tune's of little count,
And knowledge more than all to me,
Who knows what music may have died
When that small seed fell silently ?

Cúchulainn.

[The story of Cúchulainn has been re-shaped by later ages in their own image, the son of Lú, the god of light, becoming a mere militarist hero. It is certain, of course, that he belongs to a plane of being kindred to that of Prometheus, Herakles, Orpheus, etc. The tale of the Debility of the "Ulstermen," stricken as with pangs of child-birth, while Cúchulainn served and struggled for the *patria*, is manifestly symbolical. The Debility means, apparently, the sensual life.]

Light-spirit, in the real world you shone,
Among creative hierarchs a gleam,
Where rest, idea, shaping deed are one,
And time and tide are dream.

Some subtle law of being, or love of man,
Led you to earth in guise of radiant youth.
Like sudden sunrise after long dark began
Your life of love and truth.

Men had grown slaves to feuds, fears, fell desires ;
What once were hero frames and minds no more
Were match for outer foes or inner fires ;
The plague of plagues they bore.

You taught the roads that to the Light-god's wind,
The paths arcane, obscured by sins of clay,
The wizardry within the saviour Mind,
Of Godliness a ray.

Ah, long the weaklings failed to understand,
Self-hypnotised, feud-frenzied, lust-abased.
From gloom to gloom sank that fair northern land,
An uncreative waste.

You lashed the dread debility, strove to bring
The sick souls vision of Love's sanctities,
Of Nature's wonders, Beauty burgeoning
In stars, hills, sacred trees.

You taught that flowers are heroes nobler far
Than those who ravage for a wrathful king,
That shining harvest fields the cohorts are
The wise to action bring.

The Dublin Magazine

You taught the real Earth is spirit pure,
That men are spirit-children on her breast,
That Life's a grand experimental tour
For ends unmanifest.

At last, O son of Lú, light's mystic Source,
You routed all the fell foes of the race :
Pride, hatred, lust, despair. You cleared man's course
For thought and growth and grace.

Yea, you, a god clay-robed, the Ford of Mind
Held till the godly woke in blinded men,
And they the tasks before rebirth designed
Rejoicing faced again.

W. P. RYAN.

The Mountainy Yew.

As I passed through the dews of West Munster
I pulled the red fruit of the yew,
And the heel of my fist held riches
That even the birds hardly knew ;
I driving my white drift of asses—
Ah, never such grandeur was seen,
In the deeps of that country morning,
Since the woman of Beare grew lean.

Not many miles after in Connacht
The sun slipped away from the birds
And I buried that Munster yew berry
In true soil untrodden by herds ;
But its growth in the night-time had opened
A green hand of hush on my house ;
It out-grew the sun on my windows
And hid Nephin Beg in its boughs.

That yew gave me music and shelter,
And the food that flew down to its fruits,
Until age had knuckled its branches
And rocks took sap from its roots ;
It was then that I hewed from its timbers,
Bright floors level under the shoe ;
But these, with the keeves and three cradles,
Have only laths left of the yew :

Just boards for the fire or for turning
To sweet pipes, as cool on the tongue
As honey pulled newly in June time—
To suckle while evenings are young ;
But four of those boards in a coffin
Will crumble my white bones to
The quiet of dew in West Munster,
The smell of red fruit from a yew.

F. R. HIGGINS.

Bendito Sea el Año.

(PEADUARC DO LÁIR.)

Moóean an trát, an lá, an bliadóin,
An tseachtmain áin, an áit, an iat,
An taca i ucárla táitce im' éilad
Na h-eapta dáil a n-áró-bainnua.

Moóean an vásaet gráómar óian
Do beart dom gráó ná cáitpíó cian—
Sác sa do láó nár fás a rian
Mo éreat is éráóann mo lár so dial.

Moóean an vó béal bláite v'iarr
A canaó i n'óanta, a cáil san éiac,
Is pairis, m'áita 'tráet san fíar,
Mo searc oi, m'áilseas, m'áó, mo mian.

Moóean mo ééaro, mo vánta ériall
I rannaió cáóas na mná do riar—
Is m'áigne—áit éar áit i mbia
A smaet san spáirn so brát mar riam.

L. S. SÓGAN

(ó'n innsint Spáinnis).

The Field

Walking the highway white with dust I spied
A field like some Provençal pastoral,
For such a one might Nicolette have trod
Seeking her Aucassin, so close 'twas pied
With golden buttercups and marguerites.
To press my face upon the cool lush grass,
Still wet from the late rain, I left the road.
That a field could hold such joy I never dreamed
Who had lately fled despairing street and wall.
Girt with great elms, bird-music shaken it was,
The only sound save the roaming bee that fleets
From meadow-sweet to odorous campion.
As I lay there the beams of the setting sun
Made all the grass stems lucent, so I seemed
Lapt in strange seas of green and silver light.
Enthralled by these delights, I stayed until
The blossoming stars of June proclaimed the Night,
Beneath whose sway the fairest hues must yield,
Who, trailing softly over town and hill,
Vanquished the verdurous beauty of my field.

M. S. PRICE.

Vanda.

By JANKO LAVRIN.

I.

BORSKY—or, to put it formally, the concert agent, Mr. Otokar Borsky—was one of the few acquaintances I had in Prague during my first visit to that town. And he was a useful acquaintance, too: always ready to oblige, to help, to do at least some small service or other. But on one occasion he seemed inclined to make an exception: when I asked him to introduce me to Vanda Halitch.

At first he even pretended not to hear my words at all. But, as if changing his mind, he raised his bushy head, and, slightly squinting at me, drawled out as indolently as he could:

“Vanda Halitch? Fancy a green undergraduate from goodness knows where, and Vanda Halitch! Hm.”

He pronounced her name in a voice the mere intonation of which was enough to emphasise the tremendous distance between her and me. Then he went on stroking his beard with an air of wishing to drop the subject altogether. But I really ought to say a few words about his beard as well. Perhaps I ought to have started with it. For with all due respect to his numerous qualities, his beard was the most striking, or even the only striking part of his personality. So much so that his ruddy and somewhat dull face looked like a casual appendage to the mazes of black hanging hair and swinging all over his chest. At times even the whole of Borsky seemed to be an appendage to his own beard, and his mission that of stroking and caressing it the livelong day. And he did full justice to this mission. Moreover, his exterior suggested that he wished to “live up” to his beard, to be worthy of it in every word and movement. Hence that solemn and self-important indolence with which he now garnished his refusal.

Suspecting sheer pose in his air of self-importance, I waited for his further utterances. But he stroked his beard much too long without saying a word. So I remarked diplomatically, with the semblance of regretting my request:

“I asked you to introduce me because I happened to hear her recital the other day. She was wonderful.”

“Was she?”

Borsky’s squinting little eyes flashed up for a moment with the vivacity of two scared lizards.

“So you would like to know her, eh?”

He asked in such a way as if his voice, too, had suddenly begun to squint.

"It really does not matter. And, please, do not think I am like a child who begins to whimper if he is not given the toy he sees in the shop window."

Borsky lifted the end of his beard nearly up to his nose, and, twisting it rather significantly, turned to me with a conciliatory expression :

"You talk as if you were offended. Well, don't be a fool. Perhaps you will meet her one of these days if you like. I'll see to it."

"Thank you, Borsky."

"Only do not expect too much from her. Apart from her art, she is just a woman, with a woman's frailties and defects."

"All the better. I know lots of people whose only redeeming features are their defects. With their virtues alone they would be unbearable. But I hope Vanda's beauty is sufficient to make up for drawbacks. On the platform she looks bewitching."

"Not everything that glitters is gold ; especially when it glitters on the platform," Borsky remarked sententiously. But all at once he passed over to a familiar, almost confidential tone : " Besides, a woman's beauty is a relative thing. Will you believe me if I tell you that in essence she is ugly ? But she is ugly in a curious manner. She is almost beautifully ugly, if one can put it this way."

"What nonsense ! Who can be *beautifully* ugly ?"

"Well, Vanda Halitch can. Her ugliness becomes her so much as to make her look pretty, or even beautiful. No, beautiful is not the proper word. It is something different. And something that is more dangerous, too. . . . Yes, she is a strange woman. The very devil of a woman, I tell you."

Borsky's fingers began to glide more quickly and nervously along his beard. His squinting eyes seemed to have put on a veil. For a while he became pensive and silent.

II.

When Borsky introduced me to Vanda Halitch I was startled to find her far from being a beauty. Her head was much too big for her rather short body, the expression of her face too impetuous, her lower lip almost unpleasantly full and protruding. One might have detected many more irregularities. And yet I could not help feeling that there was an indefinable personal style in them which made them suit her to such an extent as to raise her quite above the line of beauty and ugliness. It was, perhaps, the gift of taste and finesse that prompted her to put every feature of hers in its right place. Or was it her disguised instinct of coquetry and conquest ? God alone knew what it was. The fact is that she turned even her defects to her own advantage. More, she made them an essential part of her attractiveness.

My surprise was considerably greater when I soon discovered something analogous also in her character. In this respect, too, she was

"beautifully ugly"—to use the paradoxical definition of Borsky himself. One could perceive in her steel-cold eyes a whole abyss of selfishness; the line of her mouth seemed hard and cruel; her entire being spoke of utter self-admiration. In short, her inner defects were, perhaps, more numerous than her physical ones. Yet her innate taste and refinement came even here to her rescue. She managed to polish, to "civilise," all her negative features in such a way as to make them suit her; as to make them even lend a kind of piquant and provoking style to her character. And so, although deficient in details, she possessed a disturbing, an almost magical attraction as a whole; an attraction which was increased by the circumstance that one never knew what in particular was attractive in her.

There was only one shortcoming, salient enough to derange the smoothness of her polished "style." It consisted in a kind of impetuous wish to excel, to dominate, or just to feel her own power. Certain casual events and trifles soon convinced me that this was her ruling passion, her mania, which was even stronger than her unusually strong will, and, therefore, always looking for some disguise or other to assert itself. She seemed to be one of those people who are continuously impelled to prove their power to others and to themselves—impelled not for any special purposes, but simply that they may brood over it with the sterile enjoyment of a miser gloating over his hidden treasure.

At times she gave the impression of being too fond of such gloating. There were moments when she could not resist the temptation of indulging in it even at the price of sudden eccentricities or dangerous escapades. However composed and self-possessed she might have been otherwise, in this respect, at least, she was a gambler. It did not take long to make me quite convinced about this. And yet the escapade she committed soon after I had first met her was so extravagant and even senseless that it compelled me to seek for entirely new motives which could throw some light upon it.

This is what happened. Vanda had given a series of musical recitals with unheard-of success. The papers unanimously proclaimed her a new star. Her audiences were stirred to enthusiasm rare in modern concert halls. And just when her glory was nearing its zenith, when she was overwhelmed with flattering compliments, invitations and engagements, she suddenly declared she would never again play in public, refusing to give any explanation of her decision.

"I always thought there was something wrong about her wits," Borsky muttered to me one evening as we walked together from her flat. "Now I see she is really mad. After such a debut and such a success! I tell you this woman is mad."

Never before had I seen him stroke his beard with such a perplexed air. Several times he pulled at it angrily as if he wanted to punish it for something. And when we said good-night to each other, he walked away more slowly than usual. He even stopped once or twice, as if talking

to himself. I looked at his disappearing figure, and felt sure he would not sleep that night.

Besides, I did not sleep either. Only my reasons were probably quite different from Borsky's. True, I was far from approving of Vanda's step. But there was something in it I liked, with all its apparent senselessness. Perhaps it was her cynical and in a way super-human disdain of fame and success that cast a spell over me. Or was it the supreme ease, the care-free air with which she gave up her brilliant career as if throwing away a cigarette stump? I don't know. But the spell itself was as powerful as it was new and strange to me. And it began to draw me to her with a magic greater than that of all her former success and glory.

III.

In spite of my intention to stay in Prague only a few weeks, again and again I postponed my departure. In a state of aimless dreaminess I strolled for days in the picturesque medieval parts of the town, until my rambles began to circle round Vanda's quarters. I felt too timid to call on her more often than was usual. Yet those days on which I had not met her seemed to me days without colour, without content. And such days were, and apparently were going to be, so many that I began to consider how to lessen their number.

Fortune seemed to favour me. For one fine morning Vanda met me in the street, and after a short chat invited me, with the most captivating of smiles, to call on her whenever I should feel lonely, or "too much of a foreigner in a foreign town."

Needless to say, I began to feel lonely as often as I possibly could. Wishing to give my loneliness a pathetic and convincing air, I always tried to put on a melancholy mood when I went to see her. In order to relieve my sad "Heimweh," as she called it, Vanda often played when we were alone. And at her best she played with such finesse and perfection as to make me really sad—sad with some indefinite longing which was beautiful and vague as the echo of a song on a fragrant May evening. What else could I do but go and see her every day, sometimes even twice a day?

Borsky did not seem to like this new habit of mine. He said nothing about it, yet he showed his displeasure through a cold reserve combined with an increasing and somewhat clumsy politeness. At first I wondered at his behaviour without guessing the real cause of such a change. But having found it out, I was dismayed, and thought it rather mean on his part to grudge me the company of Vanda. Young and shy as I was, I did not even dare to think of her as a woman. So he had no pretext for being jealous. Or was he, perhaps, actually jealous? Is it possible that the grown-up Borsky, so solidly built and bearded, should suspect a green undergraduate as his rival? To all appearance, yes. Otherwise, his behaviour would hardly be so strange and stupid.

This conjecture startled me. It also gratified my undergraduate vanity beyond measure. My self-esteem jumped up at once God alone knows how many degrees. Dear me, I was taken seriously as a rival. Then my first duty must be to take myself seriously in the same way, and justify such a claim! Why shouldn't I? Especially since Vanda herself is kinder to me than I could ever expect. Well, then, *alae jacta est*.

The very next day I put on my smartest suit and ran to Vanda with the intention of courting her. She played to me again, but I no longer enjoyed her music. While listening to it, I was now thinking of Borsky, of my ousting him, of a hundred similar petty things.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Vanda. "You do not seem to like my playing."

"I do enjoy it, but this time I should like to hear you talking and enjoy your voice also. Your voice is as sweet as your music."

Vanda suddenly laughed and got up.

"You are a naughty little rascal," she said and jokingly slapped me on my cheek.

Since that day I began to flirt with Vanda as assiduously as possible. I paid great attention to my personal appearance. I let my hair grow in order to acquire an "artistic" look. I also re-read (rather hastily) two or three novels in order to study the enamoured heroes in all their details, from the kind of flowers in their buttonholes to the character of their sighs and languid looks. At the same time I adopted a free and easy manner towards Borsky. The more frigidly correct his behaviour to me, the more kind and yet unconcerned was I towards him, although this often seemed to irritate him to the verge of exasperation.

Vanda was far from showing any displeasure at my new interest in her. The eagerness with which she seemed to accept it made me even wonder whether the real object of her invitations, as well as of all her charming artistry, had not been simply to make me lose my head. Perhaps even her music had been more like a Siren's song than anything else. For now that she saw my infatuation, she no longer cared to play. Or if she did, she played rather negligently. On the other hand, she seemed to be amused—not only by the affair itself, but also on account of the secret feud between Borsky and me. Poor Borsky must have lost long ago both his head and heart to her. But being sure of his affection, she tormented him all the more by flirting with me in his presence, particularly in his presence.

It was not long before Borsky began to show symptoms of his bad temper. Each succeeding day made him stroke his beard more gloomily than before. His right hand seemed to rummage in it as if seeking for some lost object. He talked little, and only about commonplace things. In a way I was sorry for him. And yet, by some curious law or other, his growing clumsiness gave me an influx of energy that found its outlet in an exuberant boyish wit and gaiety which I had never before suspected in myself.

Meanwhile I discovered that Vanda had several other admirers to whom she was almost as attentive as to Borsky and me. One or two of them seemed to be still in that stage which required music, and Vanda probably played to them as divinely as once she had done to me. This discovery did not fail to suggest the unpleasant conclusion that she was flirting with most of her visitors simply because she felt indifferent to all of us; especially to those of whose affection she was quite sure, that is, to people like Borsky and me. There were moments when she really forgot herself, as it were, and behaved too much like a queen who calmly takes everyone's adoration as her due and offers in return a few tokens of her benevolence—just in the manner of a bored almsgiver trying to conceal his lack of interest.

Such moments were rare, on the whole, but they always made me both sullen and furious. They also made me wonder whether I was really attached to Vanda, or merely fascinated by her, without any serious feeling beneath it. But I never dared to go into the depths of this problem. Perhaps because I dimly suspected that I wanted her attachment not so much out of true love as out of vanity, in order to boast before myself. Alas, whenever it came to a real test of Vanda's feelings, her own egotism proved even greater than mine. And so the play went on.

I was already in debt to the very neck because of her. I had spent hours and hours in front of a looking glass, desperately grimacing and forcing my face into an "artistic" expression. Yet she did not allow me to make even a declaration of love. She always knew how to avert it in time, and continued playing with me like a cat with a doomed mouse.

So I had no alternative but to console myself with the fact that she was equally capricious to others, and, perhaps, organically incapable of loving anybody or anything except her own dear ego, with all its extravagant appetites. However, it was precisely in such moods that my mind could not quite comprehend one thing: her sudden renunciation of a brilliant musical career. What could gratify her self-love if not the enthusiastic admiration of thousands of listeners? Here was an enigma which continued to puzzle me, until Vanda herself solved it one day, during a conversation with Borsky.

I found them in the heat of a discussion. Borsky was trying to persuade Vanda (for the hundredth time) to resume public recitals, when she suddenly interrupted him with manifest annoyance in her voice.

"How is it you do not understand, Borsky, that there is infinitely more enjoyment for me in the consciousness of being strong enough to spurn their praise and applause than in the greatest artistic triumph? It is so simple."

Borsky stared at her open-mouthed. His rummaging hand stopped, as if petrified, in the very middle of his beard.

"I see," he mumbled. "Is this the only reason you gave up your recitals? Strange, I almost suspected something of the sort."

"Really?" she asked in a teasing voice. "Fancy, and I never thought you were as subtle as this."

"Hm, it's sheer vanity," continued Borsky, as if he had not heard her. "The truth is you are not quite sure of your talent. So your boundless vanity wants its price now. Because later on there may be, perhaps no other opportunity such as this. . . . In essence you are a weak woman who wants to persuade herself that she is strong."

Borsky's voice had an unpleasantly offensive and personal ring. He must have been keeping for weeks and weeks some similar remark or other, relishing in advance its effect upon Vanda. But its impression was far from what he had probably expected. Instead of an answer, Vanda looked at him with such a cold and cutting glance that he became perturbed. He began to behave like a man who has committed a grave mistake and feels guilty. A little later he even tried to mend the situation with a half-apologising remark; but Vanda retorted so cruelly that he got up and went out without saying a word to her or me.

"Must he really go away like this?" I said to Vanda, feeling sorry for him and uneasy for myself.

"Oh, you can be sure he will come back to-morrow. He belongs to the faithful ones—unfortunately," she replied in the same biting tone.

And she proved right. The next day Borsky turned up again as if nothing had happened. But his face looked rather pale.

IV.

It was about this time that my relations with Borsky became painfully strained. Owing to Vanda's own tricks and meshes, our rivalry began to assume such a muddled character as to exclude any steps towards a reconciliation. Externally we went on as before. Yet we both knew that the growing tension was bound to end in an explosion. And the explosion came.

We were going home together one evening, seeking desperately for some topic of conversation. But every word uttered was so obviously a mask behind which we concealed our real feelings that at last we both preferred the awkwardness of silence to the artificiality of speech. To my delight I soon found a plausible pretext for leaving my companion. He, however, stopped me and asked without ceremony:

"When are you going away? I understood you came here only for a short time."

I felt the unpleasant moment had arrived. But, being not ready for it, I thought it best to evade the conversation. So I answered as pacifically as possible:

"O, I might go away any time. I even think a change of air would do me good."

My feigned tone, or perhaps the stupid answer itself, irritated Borsky still further. It was more by the jerks of his beard than by his gestures that I noticed how agitated he was as he continued:

"I ask you quite seriously. Not for my own sake, but for the sake of another person. You know whom I mean? Well, I don't like your being there so often. Besides, you always infect her with a kind of frivolity which is not to my taste either. I hope you understand me."

I stared with surprise at his dishevelled beard, at the malicious squint of his eyes. At first I did not quite understand the meaning of his words. But having once realised their sense and rudeness, I summoned all my will to answer with calm and with that dignity which befits an offended rival.

"I am sorry, Borsky, you don't see how ridiculous you are. Apart from that, I must remind you that the person in question is entirely free in the choice of her friends and guests. May I ask you if she has empowered you to decide whom she will and whom she will not receive?"

Borsky's beard made a defiant jerk, after which he growled in the middle of the street.

"You seem to talk as if you were my judge."

"No, I do not want to be your judge, but I should like to see more justice in *you*. And, above all, a little more generosity."

"So you have forgotten that it is only through *my* generosity that you met her at all, eh? But damn it! I am sorry I ever introduced you to her."

"And I am sorry you do not see the meanness of your remark."

"What do I care?" he shouted as before. "If I meet you at her place again you will hear some other and more drastic remarks, I tell you that."

"Bravo. And I shall be at your service at any time, provided you behave like a man and not like an irresponsible old woman."

With this I turned my back on him and went in the opposite direction.

On the whole, I was very pleased with my "dignified" behaviour. I felt proud, even elated. Nevertheless, a few minutes after I began to regret I had not been more rude to him. In fact, I was only now becoming excited about the affair. Remembering every word Borsky had flung at me, I felt that he had allowed himself too much. I even exaggerated the weight of his insult, and thought of a hundred replies which I could have said and did not say. In my bitter mood I made a few steps to run after him. But it was too late. What a pity he was gone! I clenched my fists in helpless anger.

On the other hand, I realised at last how profoundly attached he was to Vanda. This idea made my anger subside, but it increased my jealousy. However, I was now jealous not so much because of Vanda as because of his ardent love. Was I, perhaps not able to love her as deeply as my rival Borsky? Of course, I was! At any rate, I forced myself to think I was. To dispel all my doubt about the matter I suddenly decided to prove the seriousness of my love; to prove it to Borsky, to Vanda, to the whole world. And the sooner the better. Or could not this be done on the spot?

"Why not?" I asked myself. "Vanda surely has not yet gone to bed; so nothing can prevent me from going back to confess everything. And it is about time to make my declaration, too. I must make it whether she listens to me or not. But she certainly will listen—she was always so fond of my company, and always flirted with me more than with Borsky. Yes, I must have the matter finished. I must give Borsky a thorough lesson. There!"

Under the influence of this decision I rushed back to Vanda's flat with a burning wish to tell her all about the depth of my love. The mere desire to convince myself of being no less serious in this respect than Borsky made me impatient to lay myself and my whole future at her feet.

I rang the bell very resolutely. While waiting, I straightened my long hair and inspected with certain satisfaction my new boots, my trousers, and also the "artistic" tie victoriously waving round my neck. Nevertheless, I began to feel shy and nervous. The situation struck me as too delicate. Annoyed with my own timidity, I made a desperate endeavour to suppress it. When Vanda came, sleepy and surprised, I wanted to make a suitable preface. But as if fearing that my shyness would return, I hastened with the declaration itself and began to talk about the "real" thing.

I don't know how long I talked. I remember only that I was unusually eloquent; so eloquent that I began to be carried away by the stream of my own rhetoric. But Vanda was moved by it much less than I expected. She showed a complete, an offensive self-possession. For a time she looked at me with a half-mocking smile on her lips. Then—then she only raised her finger, just as one raises it at a naughty child after some stupid prank.

"You must never again talk to me like this, you silly boy. Do you not realise that this would only spoil our friendship and compel me to forbid you to see me again? Besides, it's ridiculous."

Each syllable of hers fell upon me like a lash.

"Then why did you induce me to believe we two could be more than friends?" I insisted nearly in tears. "You did everything to make me lose my head, and now that you have succeeded——"

"Nonsense! Your head is of as little interest to me as your love. Remember once for all: neither you nor anyone else can be to me more than a mere friend. Because I don't want it. One must be strong enough to live one's life without sentimentalities."

"And what about happiness?"

"The chase after happiness is a sport for weaklings, Strong characters are beyond it."

Her calm and coldness exercised now such a power over me that my despair became quite genuine. I was ready to summon again all my eloquence to argue with her, to implore her, when a new idea flashed in my head and made me ask with sudden malice:

"Do you intend to treat your chance of happiness as you did your chance of fame?"

"Please do not plagiarise Borsky, for God's sake," she retorted with anger. "Can you not find a more original pretext for quarrelling? Besides, why should I quarrel with a silly, irresponsible boy? Give me your hand and let us make peace."

Without saying a word, I pressed her fingers to my lips. As this process lasted longer than it should, she wearily withdrew her hand.

"It is late. Be sensible and go home. In spite of your behaviour, you may come again to-morrow, or one of these days—if you feel like it. . . . Good-night."

"Good-night," I whispered with resignation, and went out.

V.

I stood in the street and tried to fathom all that had happened. It took a long time before I was able to grasp the situation in its real aspect. But having once grasped it, I felt like a man who had been publicly beaten. Overwhelmed by the complete unsuccess of my gallant enterprise, I was too crushed for words. I was also tortured by the possibility that my rival Borsky would perhaps find out all about it and laugh at me. The mere idea of it made me blush for shame and bend, as it were, under the weight of my own humiliation.

Cursing Vanda, Borsky, and my own stupidity, I decided to leave Prague the very next morning. I even hurried to my rooms in order to collect and pack my things. Yet when I awoke late in the morning and saw my trunks and cases ready, my first thought was not of departure, but of Vanda. Now that she seemed unattainable, she attracted me more than ever. In spite of my resentment, I suffered from her indifference to me at least as much as I did from my own humiliation. Or rather, both these reasons were now mixed up in such a chaotic and painful confusion that I longed to see her again simply to clear up the situation—even at the price of a complete and final rupture.

The day dragged on slowly, incredibly slowly. One minute seemed to swallow the next with as much difficulty as if it had been choking with it. The evening came at last. As I did not want to meet Borsky or anyone else at Vanda's flat, I went there much earlier than usual. But to my dismay I found he had managed to precede me. On that evening he, too, had called at an hour when he felt sure of finding her alone.

At the sight of Borsky my fighting spirit awoke at once, and I walked into the room with supreme defiance. Borsky, however, took no notice of me. In fact, he did not seem to take notice of anybody or anything.

"Does he *know* about it?" was my first thought when the fiasco of the previous evening came to my mind.

I scrutinised him like an inquisitor. But he just sat there on the sofa, the very embodiment of badly-concealed distress and despondence. His

face looked worn out. His beard hung rather like a tattered sail after a storm. It was evident that he himself had just passed through an actual inner storm: he must have made a declaration to Vanda, a declaration of the same kind as mine the day before, and to all appearance with the same or even with worse luck.

At first I felt as if an immense burden had been taken off my soul. What relief it was to be sure he did not know anything, and that, moreover, he himself was in the same mess as I. But no sooner had I realised this than to my double relief a strange kind of pity was added. I began to be sorry for Borsky nearly as much as I was sorry for myself—quite apart from the unpleasant and even hostile feeling one has towards people who are in the same kind of fiasco as oneself. Poor Borsky! So this was the unromantic end of our romantic rivalry. Now we could probably compete again—in our resentment towards Vanda, compete not as enemies, but as allies. And why not?

I began to wonder at the petty cause of my quarrel with Borsky. He struck me again as quite a decent fellow with whom one ought to be on good terms. True, he was a little clumsy; but had he not always been as good and kind to me as any friend? Why on earth should I go on quarrelling with him? Would it not be better to make peace and forget all these unpleasant things?

I actually turned to him and uttered some friendly remark. My words came out so awkwardly and unnaturally that I blushed and went over to Vanda, who was arranging cups and saucers on the table, quietly humming a tune.

As if on purpose, she happened to be at her best that night. Every inch of her dress was in perfect harmony with her limbs and movements. She was like a magnificent satiated cat which relishes the pleasant after-effects of its food and lazily stretches itself in its most coquetting pose. And yet everything in her—from the half-mocking and half-enticing smile on her lips to the bits of fine lingerie provokingly peering from beneath her skirt and blouse—gave the impression of being somehow calculated. It looked as if she wanted to point out all the graces of which she was capable in order to tantalise Borsky and me. She tried to be extremely kind to both of us. But in her exaggerated kindness itself there was a note of ironical cruelty and the desire to make her two discarded admirers feel what an incredible treasure they lost in losing her. Every gesture of hers seemed to imply: "You must admire me, although I am indifferent to both of you. I want to revel in your admiration, in your pain, in your ruin."

I don't know how it happened, but her cold and calculated perfection all at once suggested to me the idea that she was not a living being, but perhaps only "style" without substance, a cold and self-conscious work of art. Or even something worse than this: just a sterile old maid in whom the soul had been sapped and replaced by the primeval untamed female re-awakened in its most disgusting, that is, in its castrated form—

“refined” *à la mode*. All her taste and talents were but slaves of her ambitious and revengeful sterility, of her destructive “will to power.”

I could hardly have formulated these conjectures on that evening, but I remember I did feel them. Or some *alter ego* in me must have felt them. Because there was a moment when all my profoundest instincts arose against her as if stirred up by the presence of some sudden danger.

I guessed that something within me was at stake, something of enormous importance for myself, and that I must defend it whether I had grasped it or not. Every fibre of my soul seemed to be ready to rise in self-defence against this woman, or perhaps against the eternal female in her. At that very instant some new gulf opened, as it were, before my eyes: the gulf between man and woman. For the first time in my life I realised how haunting and terrible its depths must be to all those whom fate plunges into it in the way she had plunged Borsky, for instance. Or as she could have plunged myself also. Fortunately, I stopped on the brink. And thank God for this!

It was during those few moments that an unaccountable change took place in me. Some part of my innermost ego had suddenly grown mature, as though by a shock. A mysterious hand must have removed the scales from my eyes, for even my sight was changed. The former limelight of life had vanished: I began to see things and people in the light of full day. And what a difference it made! Vanda herself now mattered to me only in so far as I wanted to get rid of her, to forget her very name. Through her *chic* and rouge there began to leer at me but a kind of rapacious suburban Salome—without Salome’s passion. All her ugliness stood there unmasked. So I became entirely reconciled to the idea of going away for good. At the same time a feeling of infinite loneliness dropped upon me and made me sad. All my former gaiety disappeared as if by a miracle. I probably looked more apathetic and gloomy than Borsky himself.

And our conversation on that evening! Each of our words was strained and heavy as if pulled out of a bottomless pit. To make matters worse, there called two more admirers of Vanda’s who were in excellent spirits and began to crack jokes at the expense of Borsky and me. Especially one of them—I think he was an actor—was teeming with ironic witticisms, while Borsky and I continued to rival each other in silence and dullness. Fortunately, Borsky soon rose to go home, and I followed suit. Vanda took no pains to hide her relief.

I silently walked beside Borsky in the dark streets. The whole town seemed deserted. The air was heavy with that stifling weight which announces the approach of a storm.

“I think it is going to rain,” I said, just to start conversation. As Borsky did not answer, I added—partly to my own surprise: “I am awfully sorry, Borsky, for our misunderstanding last night. The best we can do is to forget all about it. Especially as I am going away for ever.”

Borsky's right hand made a nervous and almost angry pull at his beard, but he remained silent.

"I really am going away to-morrow. And I beg your pardon for many things. Will you believe me that all this devilry did not come from malice on my part? Goodness knows what it came from. I feel like a man who has just awakened from a queer dream and is rubbing his eyes. . . . We were friends before, and I should be glad if we parted as friends," I said warmly.

"Friends in the same misfortune?" he asked, twisting his beard and measuring me with a glance in which there was more grief than irony.

"Ye—e—es, in a way. . . . Anyhow, your diagnosis of her attitude towards fame could be well applied also to her attitude towards love."

"Hm, I am glad you noticed this in time," he replied, in his slow, drawling voice. And as if wanting to conceal some disturbing thought, he hurriedly extended his hand: "Well, why should we not part as friends? Good luck to you, and a happy journey."

The following morning I left Prague with a firm resolution never to see it again.

VI.

More than five years later I was on the way from Dresden to Vienna, and decided to stop for a few hours in Prague.

Vanda Halitch had been almost swept out of my memory. But when the train was roaring and panting in the suburbs of Prague the days I once had spent in that town came back in dim visions. Much had happened in the meantime. So much, indeed, that I felt as old as if I had lived since then, not five, but five hundred years. A sad mood took possession of me, and I became sadder still as I walked towards Borsky's house.

Borsky seemed pleased with my visit. His beard was still as solemn and resplendent as ever. Its solemnity was rendered even more conspicuous by the fact that his ruddy head had become entirely bald. Otherwise he was now a married, worthy-looking gentleman, inclining towards plumpness, and extremely proud of being the father of two charming children. I found him also much more talkative, especially when he spoke of himself or his own affairs. As I anticipated, his wife was not Vanda, but a provincial lady from the district of Tabor. She struck me as rather commonplace; but it is quite possible that for this very reason she was a model wife. At all events, she seemed to keep her home and husband in a state of perfect order, which was perhaps just a trifle too self-satisfied and too formal for entire comfort.

On the evening of my arrival I sat in a café and listened to Borsky's eulogies of his wife and children. According to his own words, he had adopted at last a "relatively positive view of life," and, with firm ground under his feet, he was now happy, quite happy.

"The secret of happiness is limitation," he concluded sententiously, and pulled with such energy at his beard as if wanting to extract its consent also. "Yes, limitation, my dear sir. One must accept the inevitable without grumbling. In fact, what is the use of all high-flying ambitions if their only result is a broken life, or at least a broken heart? My ideal is a mediocre but useful existence in perfect peace with myself and others. I hope it's an ideal that is worth while."

"Perhaps you have chosen the better part, Borsky. Although, who can say? These matters are complex, so complex. . . . But tell me now something about Vanda. Is she still in Prague?"

"Vanda Halitch?" asked Borsky in a tone as if he were talking of last year's weather. "No, she is no longer here. I am sorry I have no notion of her whereabouts. Besides, they no longer interest me. To tell you the truth, fate seems to have been rather hard on her, but after all——"

"Please do tell me all about it," I interrupted. "All that has happened since my departure."

"Well, after your departure, she remained the same as before. No, she became worse. She went on playing with me, with others—there were crowds of other unsuccessful wooers and admirers. But inwardly she just laughed at all of us. She was a woman with a frozen soul—that's all. A young fool went so far as to shoot himself because of her. Do you think she took it to heart? I never saw her more happily excited than on the day after his suicide. But she got her due in the end. Do you believe in retribution, sir?"

"Yes—when I see that it has not confused the addresses: a thing which it does only too often."

"Hm, in Vanda's case it found the address all right. And even too soon. For she was at the very pinnacle of her flirtation when a grave illness all of a sudden deformed her figure and marred her face. You can imagine the speed with which the queue of her admirers melted away, he—he—he. All of them went, the scoundrels, all but one."

"You mean to say all but yourself?"

"Precisely. I happened to be loyal enough to remain even after that. And so I was the only witness of her strange conversion. It was a spectacle to make the devil weep, I tell you. . . . Just try to imagine the disfigured Vanda Halitch in real, in passionate love! For in her own way she fell in love. She really did. There may have been the disguised fear of loneliness in it, or the despair at her maimed life—who knows?—but there was something else and probably something more, too. In a word, with all her charms lost and her youth withered, she came to me like a starved beggar. She came with such a mad thirst for happiness, for love and affection that I got frightened and even somewhat disgusted. Yes, disgusted. . . . When she stood before me in her misery I began to pity her. It was perhaps this pity that killed the last remnants of my love."

“ And the result ? ”

“ The result is quite logical, in so far as life is capable of logic. Gradually, against my own will, I began to hate her, resenting all my past suffering on her account. Finally, she became a burden to me, and one day I fled from Prague, leaving a message that I never wanted to meet her again. It was cruel, of course, but I could not help it. I really could not help it. . . . The shock was probably too much for her. She fell ill again. Soon after that she tried to take up once more her forfeited musical career. She now embraced music with frenzy—not for the sake of art, of course, not even as a new effort of her clipped will to power and self-admiration, but simply as a shelter. . . . She gave three or four concerts, and only think of it !—this time she was a failure, an absolute failure, I tell you. All her former taste, all the inward vigour with which she once had bewitched her audiences, had vanished without a trace. Just like smoke. It seemed as if music itself had taken revenge upon her. . . . Of course, she was no longer strong enough to stand such a blow. She tried to forget herself in drink and even in worse things : she plunged hysterically into the marsh of so-called Bohemia, or half-Bohemia, if you like. . . . According to the tidings I had about her, she is living somewhere in the provinces with a degraded ex-actor who gets drunk every day and beats her. That’s all.”

We were both silent for a while, sipping our coffee.

“ Well, it is a pity. But, after all, life as a whole is a pitiless business, isn’t it ? ” Borsky drawled out in his sententious way, and stroked more and more pensively his solemn, bushy beard.

A Bit o' Connemara.

By PATRICK KELLY.

THE truth about Connemara has been written so often within the past forty years, and from standpoints so widely different, that, seemingly, nothing remains to be written now but fiction ; but if " truth is stranger than fiction," then fiction may very well be believed when truth is looked on with suspicion and doubt, and received with an irritating shrug of the shoulders.

Connemara seems to express itself strongly in terms of fly-fishing, scenery, distress, emigration, the Irish Language, poteen, and a recent and tentative variety of potato. Sometimes one of these thrusts itself forward boldly, claiming a great deal of public attention, because of the steady curiosity of the reading public, and exciting the interest of the Special Correspondent ; then it slips back quietly to the rear ; one of the others advances, and we have the same monotonous business all over again. But as yet we have not had an exact solution of the elusive problem of Connemara which seems to embrace *all* the factors mentioned.

To-day the respectable citizen of Dublin who throws a passing glance at a newspaper placard, who reads occasionally the heading of a principal news item, and who attends a cinema theatre regularly, will ask you with the air of one seeking to humbug you : " Is there distress down in Connemara really ? " and answer his own question with : " Of course, the thing is very much exaggerated ; the newspapers must dig up sensations, y' know."

Well, there *is* distress in Connemara just now, and rather acute distress too. Last year the potato crop all but failed, and the heavy and constant rains made the saving of turf sufficient for the season an utter impossibility. So the distress came about.

Connemara is a strange country, a country of contradictions. Its nominal capital is Clifden, but its real capital is Boston in the United States of America.

Some of the most powerful men in this island, men of iron strength and tremendous powers of endurance ; some of the handsomest women and prettiest children, are to be found on the coast of Connemara and on the islands off the coast. And all this in spite of the hovels and the degradation and the special misery of the Special Correspondent.

The people of Connemara have a wonderful capacity for happiness, and a whimsical humour that is wholly delightful, and that even the darkest day and the hardest trial cannot suppress.

There is no " land " in Connemara. Mountains are there, and beautiful lakes, and swiftly-flowing streams, and deep, narrow, creeping streams, and swamps and stones, and little patches of more or less sheltered ground

where the meagre crops are grown—but there is no “land”; that is to say, Connemara—or at least the greater part of Connemara—has no farms. And it follows from this that all the theory of all the theorists, concerning agriculture and so-called “improved methods of cultivation,” might as well be preached to the Man in the Moon as to the inhabitants of Connemara. Why, the poor tiller in that great lone country, working on tradition, is able to get a better return from his miserable nine or ten acres of indescribable soil than would the best Professor of Agriculture in all Europe, were he to condescend, spade in hand, to try his luck and test his skill beyond the hills of Maam.

I have always thought that in a bad year the people of Connemara are much in the same position as the garrison of a beleaguered town in the days of (say) Frederick the Great. When there was a lull in the attack, the garrison, prompted by hunger, perhaps, and deeming that food was to be had, if not in the enemy's lines, then beyond them, made a sortie—hit and got back, so to speak, the enterprise more or less successful. Similarly, the people of Connemara, in the intervals of fierce rain-charged winds, rush out from the shelter of their cabins to sow or save a crop, and rush back again when wind and cloud rally and concentrate, and open another attack.

“Under what possible conditions will the people of Connemara be thoroughly satisfied?” a fly-fishing tourist once asked. He was what is called a “practical” man, and practical men have never accomplished anything worthy of note in this world.

However, the question is a good one, and very easily answered.

The people of Connemara will be thoroughly satisfied when the climate of Ireland accepts respectability as its guiding principle, when America is the America of the Irishman's dream, when immigration, so far as Ireland is concerned, is no longer restricted by the Authorities at Washington, and when poteen is manufactured from barley and rye, as it used to be (three parts barley and one part rye), and not from chemicals, as it is.

Connemara is over-populated, and that's the truth—sad or otherwise. It has been said that an attempt will be made by the Government to remove some of the people to the rich lands of Leinster. The people of Connemara will not leave their beloved home, with all its strange charms and strong traditions, for Leinster, or any other part of Ireland, if they can possibly help it. Either Connemara or America. There is no third place within the range of their vision.

It has been said by ardent admirers of the people of Connemara that they have no faults. This is wrong: they have more than one fault. They are inclined to depend too much upon the supposed omnipotence of Government. They might of themselves, and at very small cost, improve their homes and make them more comfortable. They might, with profit, pay a little more attention to drainage. They might, also with profit, study the great virtue of that simple combination called soap-and-water.

They might show a little more love for the poetry of flowers. . . . But what can you expect? The young have their eyes fixed on America and the old upon Heaven.

America. . . . In that single word lies the solution of the dislike, now openly expressed in Connemara, of the Irish Language, or rather of the teaching of Irish in the schools. They say—and who can answer them to their satisfaction?—"Why are our children taught so much Irish at school?—what wonder if it *was* Irish! It is English they want. They must go to America to earn their living, and English is use to them in America and Irish is not." And then with a shake of the head they tell you the story of the girl who was sent back from the office of the American Consul in Dublin because she failed in the English test. She returned to Connemara in tears. America, the land of her waking dreams, and perhaps of the dreams of her sleep, was lost to her for ever. . . . And in their peculiarly impressive style they finish by saying: "Let them fire away. The children will have neither English nor Irish before very long, and that's the end of the story. God help us anyhow."

Yes, God help us, one and all, and God help Connemara. Surely He will, for those kindly, simple, and entirely lovable people deserve His help, or, at least, seek to deserve it.

Gnat on the Railing.

By DON RYAN.

THE curve of the beach was like an immense proscenium. And there being neither moon nor stars, sea and sky were woven together to make the curtain of this stage. Misty and vast, it swung from the heights of eternity, fringed with white where the breakers threw themselves thudding upon the sand.

Being an actor, he imbibed the feeling of a theatre—a theatre so large and misty and incomprehensible that instinctively Alstone leaned back on his perch at the top of the cliff and narrowed his eyes, trying to focus this immensity within his ken.

The curtain which depended in front of him dwarfed in its inception anything that Alstone had ever conceived. Looking at it caused him to review with surprise the attenuated splinters which he lately had taken for thoughts. He wondered at the feebleness of his imagination.

Alstone studied the curtain curiously, as he would have studied an extraordinary theatre drop composed by Leon Bakst.

It was inscrutably opaque. Gray-blue. No seam was visible where a blue-black stripe—the sea—was merged in the hazy upper reaches of the sky. Only a diffused union there was—such as is achieved by the hand of a skilful dyer.

The white fringe of breakers at the base of the curtain was constant but agitated, as a theatre curtain is agitated by drafts from the empty stage behind.

At the foot of the cliffs was the orchestra pit. The thudding breakers reminded Alstone that the orchestra was coming up from below—groping up the narrow, winding stair, thumping their feet in the darkness, shuffling sheets of music, whispering.

It was as though he were a gnat perched on the railing of the orchestra pit before this curtain of immensity, looking down into the pit with the uncomprehending eyes of a gnat. Perched there for the space of seconds while the orchestra was tramping up from below, while the white fringe of the curtain rustled in the drafts, while a great audience sat on the mountain-tops with their feet on the hassock hills behind him.

For an hour the gnat would be perched there—an hour in the life of a gnat—a few seconds to the assembling orchestra, to the audience settling in chairs ranged along the mountain-tops, to the actors waiting behind that curtain of mystery.

And Alstone, being an actor, began to wonder what kind of performers were waiting there for their cues. He tried to imagine them. It was

as if the gnat perched on the orchestra rail were trying to imagine actors.

He could get a conception of their size, based on the dimensions of that curving proscenium and the unfathomable curtain that hung there. The size was easy.

He found himself thinking of them as gods in the images of men and women, rendered divine by the majesty of their bearing and by unreal attributes which do not belong to mankind. A jumbling of men and beasts—wings on their backs—a queen with the tail of a great fish—creatures such as he had seen represented in "The Battle of the Sea Gods," an engraving by Mantegna.

He could see them in comedy and tragedy, stalking the boards of that heroic stage with haughty majesty. Their faces should wear a like expression of grandeur, abandon, sincerity, and controlling greatness. Speaking with voices of thunder. Actors whose incorruptible majesty would dignify alike the throaty anguish of a Bernhardt or the somersault of a Toto. These, he thought, must be they.

No. He brought himself up. They could not be like these imaginings. He was still the gnat on the rail. A gnat, trying to imagine the actors in a man's theatre, would give them the attributes of god-like gnats—made god-like by borrowed parts of other insects—the antennae of beetles—the wings of butterflies. Gnats, perhaps, which could hum like bees.

He was as far as ever from a conception of the actors who were waiting back there in the wings—waiting for the invisible audience to settle itself on the mountain-tops—waiting for the orchestra to play the overture, and the nebulous curtain to go up and reveal them in their parts.

Well, then, what were they? He felt that if he could only wait long enough the curtain would rise before his eyes and the mystery would be solved without his feeble brain.

If the gnat could only retain its perch for a few minutes in this theatre—but such a long time in the busy life of a gnat. Even now the curtain was rustling as though an invisible stage manager had stepped up and was scrutinizing the house through a peep-hole. Presently a signal would be given to the orchestra. If only he could wait.

But he realized that he could never stick it out. Realities of insect life soon would call him away. This he knew, and tried again to vision the actors behind the curtain.

This time he pursued a mental process that went farther into the horizon than is usual with a mental process of a gnat. He pondered long. Gradually it dawned on him that these actors, if seen as entities by the eyes of an insect, would be unrecognizable. The gnat's eyes are made for magnifying small objects with which its daily life is concerned. If it tried to look at these actors of the eternal stage it would see only vacancy standing upright in their empty buskins.

Does the gnat on the orchestra rail know when the play begins? For all the gnat may know the play is even now in progress—visible to the audience on the mountain-tops—for they alone possess the sane, reducing qualities of perspective.

To a gnat the swish of air that comes with the swing of a lace on an actor's buskin is a hurricane mistaken by the insect for the power of the god. As such it is worshipped. Perhaps the actor only crossed his legs.

Crossed his legs, leaning negligently against a table . . . facing his audience over the intervening space of hills and valleys . . . leaning out . . . down.

Can the gnat see the actor? Not through eternity!

Can the actor see the gnat? Will he? Should he?

Wherefore should he? . . . Distracting the stage of creation. . . . There are sunny spots where gnats may buzz. . . . Overripe oranges in the galvanized can by the stage door. . . . Worlds to conquer. . . . Each orange a world to buzz over.

Alstone rose with a sound in his ears. Z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z!

It grew louder as he approached the village, where the gnats were about their dinner.

From the Stalls.

The Triumph of Juno.

By ANDREW E. MALONE.

"I FORGET," wrote Sarcey, "what tyrant it was of ancient Greece to whom massacres were everyday affairs, but who wept copiously over the misfortunes of a heroine in a tragedy." Dublin audiences are somewhat like that Greek—they endured the blood-letting of several years stoically and laughed uproariously at the tragedy of Juno. And the tragedy of Juno is of infinitely greater significance to Dublin, to Ireland, and to the world than the more spectacular melodrama played on the political stage. To audiences, however, it is not so—they have handled their guns like men, and now it is time to laugh. What matter if the laughter be induced by the tragedy of a great woman! After all, Juno is only a social martyr, a speck of dust beneath the Juggernaut of a social system. It is sweet and noble to die for one's country, but it is only a music-hall "turn" to die of hunger in a tenement in a Dublin slum. So it would seem if we accept the joyous laughter which greeted Sean O'Casey's two tragedies at the Abbey Theatre. Life is a rollicking comedy to the audiences and a hideous tragedy to the dramatist, but it is not entirely the fault of the audiences that the hideousness of Sean O'Casey's tragedies failed to affect them. As played at the Abbey Theatre it was the tragi-comic rather than the truly tragic aspects of his plays that were emphasised, and the superb acting of F. J. McCormack and Barry Fitzgerald as Joxer and the Captain veiled the tragic significance of Juno as played by Sara Allgood. The audiences took the two typical Dublin loafers to their hearts, more easily, perhaps, because that type had never found itself on the stage of the Abbey Theatre before.

Sean O'Casey is not the first playwright to stage the slums of Dublin and to portray the hardy, vivacious race that inhabits them in a play. Some years ago two plays did that, and both passed without serious notice. They were Wilson's *The Slough* and a blistering satire entitled *Blight* by one who called himself Alpha and Omega. Then there was Daniel Corkerry's play, *The Labour Leader*, which, somewhat incidentally perhaps, used the same material. These plays were all serious; none of them was in any way calculated to make audiences laugh. They did not make audiences laugh—in fact, the audiences were so very small that the plays have been dropped from the repertoire of the Abbey Theatre. Such is the fate of serious plays dealing with serious subjects. "Life is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel." The playwrights felt tragedies, but the audiences insisted upon seeing only comedies. So they laughed.

Perhaps some time a psychologist will examine theatre crowds, as Gustave Le Bon examined political crowds. It will be one of the most fascinating studies ever undertaken, and will be of very great assistance to theatre managers, actors, and dramatists. Why do theatre audiences laugh at the wrong things? Why, in fact, do they laugh in the theatre at things which excite their pity in daily life? Why do they laugh at Joxer and the Captain in the theatre and treat them as a problem when they worry the newspapers with their letters? It is something that Le Bon ought to have tackled, but perhaps he, too, was dazzled by the mirage of politics, like Johnny Boyle who was crippled fighting for the freedom of his country, but who gaily endured the filth of the slums, the laziness of his father and the slavery of his mother.

It was with a certain misgiving that I opened this book of Sean O'Casey's plays.* I had seen them both in the theatre, and I was not carried away as were many in the audiences. I thought when I saw the plays, and my thought is strengthened by reading them, that O'Casey's meaning failed to get across the footlights. They are tragedies of disillusionment which were played, and accepted, as comedies of errors. Let me say at once that one, *Juno and the "Paycock,"* is tragedy at its best and greatest. The other, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, is that shadow of tragedy called melodrama. Tragedy presents a solemn view of life, with depth, with feeling, so that the action clearly depicts the concern of all humanity. There may be sorrow, sin, death, blood, tears, and suffering, but if the imagination be not led onwards and upwards from the individual to the universal the play containing them is but superficial and melodramatic. Because of this superficiality, because of its close resemblance to a weekly newspaper in the Ireland of 1921, *The Shadow of a Gunman* is merely melodrama, and must inevitably lose its significance quickly. *Juno and the "Paycock"* has also its superficial qualities verging upon the melodramatic, but it is lifted and ennobled by the character of Juno. Juno is the great mother, as great as the greatest mother in history or drama, even though her scope be limited to two rooms in a Dublin slum tenement. The tragic significance of Mrs. Alving, in *Ghosts*, is small when compared with the tragic significance of Juno. Her son dead "for his country," her daughter betrayed by a worthless liar, her husband a boasting, drunken, lying wastrel, she rises superior to her slum surroundings and prepares to begin her struggle anew.

It is difficult to summarise O'Casey's plots; in a sense it may be said that his plays have no plots, and those critics who think that a plot and a play are synonymous would rule him out of the list of playwrights in company with Eugene O'Neill and Schnitzler. These plays depend upon personalities rather than plots; upon Davoren, Shields, Maguire, and Minnie Powell in *The Shadow of a Gunman*, and upon Joxer Daly, "Captain" Boyle, and Juno in *Juno and the "Paycock,"* but the other

persons play important if minor parts. Story there is none ; they are "slices of life" in the strictest and best sense of that ill-used phrase. But a story must be made if the plays are to be summarised so as to be intelligible. "Captain" Jack Boyle, his wife Juno, with Johnny and Mary, their children, live in a two-roomed "flat" in a tenement house in Dublin. Jack Boyle is a public-house lounge, who got his title of "captain" by being "only wanst on the wather, in an oul' collier from here to Liverpool." Juno works, while her husband drinks and lounges, as does Mary also, but she is presently on strike against the victimisation of a fellow-worker. Johnny "was only a chiselur of a Boy Scout in Easter Week, when he got hit in the hip ; and his arm was blew off in the fight in O'Connell Street." "Joxer" Daly is the "butty" or drinking companion of Jack Boyle. He is a typical Dublin wastrel, deceitful, lazy, hypocritical, and detested by Juno. Mary Boyle is being courted by Jerry Devine, who has dreams of becoming a leader of labour, but she throws him over in favour of Charlie Bentham, a school teacher, now studying law. Into the Boyle household comes Bentham with the story of a legacy, and upon this prospect the Boyles buy furniture and give a party to celebrate. The festivities are interrupted by the funeral of the son of another resident in the house, whose body had been found on the roadside "beyant Finglas, riddled with bullets." The entire party goes out to view the procession. Only Johnny, the crippled boy, remains, and to him is brought a message "to attend a Battalion Staff meetin' the night afther to-morrow." Johnny passionately refuses to take any notice. "I done enough for Ireland," he says, to which the messenger retorts : "Boyle, no man can do enough for Ireland." Soon rumour begins to cast doubts upon the Boyle legacy. Bentham has gone to England, the tailor takes the "captain's" new clothes, the furniture dealers take away the furniture, and Mrs. Madigan takes the gramophone in lieu of her unpaid loan. Juno has taken Mary to a doctor, whose report makes the freedom-loving Jerry Devine spurn where he once loved. Johnny and his father disown Mary. The "captain" goes out to get drunk, vowing vengeance upon his return. Johnny is taken away for execution as a spy, being responsible, it is alleged, for the death of his neighbour's son and his own one-time chum. The room is desolate, bare, cheerless.

Mrs. Boyle—We'll go, Mary, we'll go ; you to see your poor dead brother, an' me to see me poor dead son.

Mary—I dhread it, mother, I dhread it !

Mrs. Boyle—I forgot, Mary, I forgot ; your poor oul' selfish mother was only thinkin' of herself. No, no, you mustn't come—it wouldn't be good for you. You go on to me sither's an' I'll face the ordeal meself. Maybe I didn't feel sorry enough for Mrs. Tancred when her poor son was found as Johnny's been found now—because he was a Die-hard ! Ah, why didn't I remember that then he wasn't a Die-hard or a Stater, but only a poor dead son ! It's well I remember all that she said—an' it's my turn to say it now : What was the pain I suffered, Johnny, bringin' you into the world to carry you to your

cradle, to the pains I'll suffer carryin' you out of the world to bring you to your grave ! Mother o' God, Mother o' God, have pity on us all ! Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets ? Sacred Heart of Jesus, take away our hearts of stone, and give us hearts o' flesh ! Take away this murderin' hate an' give us Thine own eternal love. (*They all go slowly out.*)

Boyle and Joxer return very drunk, talking patriotic nonsense.

Boyle—I'm telling you . . . Joxer . . . th' whole worl's . . . in a terr . . . ible state o' . . . chassis.

"Patriotism is not enough," this play shouts at an audience, and the audience laughs at the drunken antics of Joxer and Boyle. Sacrifices are made in the name of, and for, the motherland, but the mother is sacrificed, spurned, derided, and ignored. Kathleen Ni Houlihan is loved, but she is an abstraction, a theory ; Juno is compelled to live in a slum, to see her children sacrificed, but she is ignored because she is merely a reality of flesh and blood. Even her own son will fight for the motherland instead of working to help his mother. Not in Ireland only does this happen. For years all Europe knew it when the drums sounded and the flags were unfurled. And when will the world know it again ?

Coming after *Juno*, the comparative poverty of *The Shadow of a Gunman* is quickly manifested. A woman is again sacrificed to the cowardice of men, but the play is little more than a commentary upon contemporary events. Again the scene is a Dublin tenement in which live Shields, a pedlar, and Davoren, a poetic dreamer. Shields is a loquacious patriot, a hero in speech, but a coward in action. His room-mate, Davoren, is above and outside the battle. Davoren, however, is believed to be a gunman "on the run," and is treated accordingly. Maguire, nominally a pedlar, leaves his bag in the room. Minnie Powell, who has a room in the house, falls in love with "the shadow of a gunman," Davoren. A raid is made upon the house by Black-and-Tans. The pseudo-pedlar, Maguire, has been killed in an ambush. His bag is found to contain bombs. Minnie takes the bag to her room where the raiders find it. She is arrested, and is killed "trying to escape." The lesson is the same, though the play be poor. The innocent are goaded to destruction by the men of words, the speech-makers and the poets, while those word-spinners live to be hailed as "the men who won the war."

Sean O'Casey has produced a great play in *Juno and the "Paycock,"* and a poor melodrama in *The Shadow of a Gunman*. His two one-act plays cannot be taken seriously, and should never have been staged. He has been hailed as a great dramatist, the greatest since Synge. That is extravagant praise and not warranted by the facts. Nevertheless, *Juno* is a great play, in the first rank of its kind, and if Mr. O'Casey's genius be strong enough and great enough to equal *Juno* in his future work, perhaps the praise may be justified.

On Academic Hate.

By HILAIRE BELLOC.

ALL things are funny which are out of proportion, and there is one particularly funny thing, the funniness of which depends upon a monstrous disproportion : that funny thing has no regular name. Some of my friends call it the *Ille Sceleratissimms Brunckius*. It is the monstrous rage of the learned. It is the modern form of the old *odium theologicum*.

I know all about it, for I have had it myself, and I have lived for years in places where it flourished exceedingly. It is inexhaustibly comic.

A man has read all there is to read about a particular campaign, let us say, all the exceedingly unsatisfactory short and scrappy evidence of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. He has read all round his subject as well, and he has visited the place and studied the ground. He comes to a conclusion, as, for instance, that Hannibal crossed by the Little St. Bernard.

Another man comes along who has done just the same thing—read all the very short and exceedingly unsatisfactory evidence, read all round the subject, and concludes that Hannibal crossed by the Great St. Bernard. It does not in the least matter where he crossed. It is one of those very few controversial things in history which are not connected with any more-or-less-conscious religious motive. It is a thing which you can go on debating for ever, because the evidence is insufficient, and because you do not know whether your witnesses are telling the truth or amusing themselves.

The sparring begins. At first the antagonists are reasonably polite. I notice that they even compliment each other in public, through a subtle form of pride ; for each in so doing gives the audience to understand that he and his opponent belong to a very special and important and small group of superior beings. Letters and articles are exchanged. Then, somewhere about the third or fourth letter or controversial article, fermentation begins, and with it the fun. One of them accuses the other of lying or ignorance, or both. The other answers by marvelling how any human being could be so stupid as to have misunderstood his simple phrase, or so bestially blind to the texts. In a little while they are hurling insults at each other as violently as if each had murdered the other's child. Then there comes the stage when the anger is speechless, "too full for sound or foam."

The average honest man coming across controversies of this kind is bewildered ; the very good man is saddened. As for me, I am enormously amused.

Whenever I hear that one of these little scraps has arisen, I make eagerly for the papers where I can read the mutual abuse of the combatants,

and I always feel a disappointment as I see the stage of exhaustion or speechlessness approaching.

It is especially funny when the two men are really learned upon a very obscure point of which I, the reader, know nothing whatever. There were two men at it some years ago upon a Lithuanian word, and I am as innocent of Lithuanian as it is possible for a man to be. They brought out whole regiments of funny-looking words, spelt diabolically, and they would appeal in the most naive manner to the attendant human race, asking whether the conclusion were not clear—though not one man out of ten thousand who read them had the least idea what it was all about.

Then I remember another case, upon a subject which I had read up rather carefully, to wit, the fate of the house which Robespierre once inhabited in the Rue St. Honore. How much of it, if any of it, remained?

This controversy was carried on between two men, each writing in a Review dealing with the French Revolution alone. Each, by the way, was representative of the two divisions into which the great French religious and political quarrel falls; but there could be no conceivable reason why the Republican Atheist should have wanted Robespierre's house to remain (or to have disappeared—I forget which it was), or why the Royalist Christian should have wished it to disappear (or remain). All I know is that long before the dozen articles were polished off, one was accusing the other of being a forger, and the other was accusing the first of deliberate lying.

It was great fun. I felt myself so strongly thirty years ago on the subject of the three-field system of agriculture and its survival from Roman times, that for several months I could not trust myself to meet an honest gentleman who knew more about it than I, and was probably as wrong as I was. And I have known a case of two life-long friends, belonging to the same club, who became (and have remained) irreconcilable enemies over the question of a London street, whether it did or did not, two hundred years ago, end in a blind alley.

The material for these quarrels always has the same character. In the first place there must be no possibility of victory, that is, there must be no evidence so overwhelming, so convincing to every plain man, that the man quoting it is unanswerable. No, the essential of this huge joke, which we are happily permitted to enjoy, is a vague and doubtful hypothesis. Thus, in the matter of Hannibal's circus, you have to guess what "four days' distance from" may mean, whether four days' marching or posting. Having discovered that, you have to guess from what point the distance was taken. Then you have the pleasing feature of a piece of land called "an island"—of course, it is not an island. It is either the land between the Durance and the Isère or between the Isère and the Rhone. You have to identify a white rock (in the Alps, ye gods! in the Alps, one white rock between Lake Lemman and the Mediterranean!). Then you have to find a place on a pass from which you can see the plains of Italy below you, supposing always that the speech mentioning them

was really made—of which there is no certitude whatever. Supposing Hannibal did make that speech, you must decide whether it were not empty rhetoric—for a man can point to the plains of Italy without seeing them, just as the accused politician will point proudly to the honour of his public career, although it is not there. Anyhow, there would be no controversy about Hannibal's march, and there would be no friendships broken over it, and we should not, any of us, have the amusement of watching vigorous blows delivered and horrible insults hurled in that connection, if we had full evidence of what happened. The first essential of this farce is vague hypothesis.

The second essential is learning. No superficial man falls into those grotesque rages. It is only the men who really have gone right into the subject who are seized by the madness.

Now, whence does this madness proceed? What are the rights of the thing? I have never been able to analyse it. I have never understood it. I only know that this mood arises and is utterly irrational. That a man should hate another to the death over some loved object would be comprehensible; but no one can love a dry theory. That a man should resent insult is natural; but the exchange of insults in these quarrels is an effect and not a cause.

Hackneyed as the theme is, I have an original contribution to make. There is no one of us but, upon the arising of one of these quarrels (and you get them in the learned world every week), can do the thing that is at once most amusing and worthy; there is no one of us but can play the part of peacemaker towards the end of the quarrel, and at the same time vastly increase its comedy. I will tell you how this is done.

Just before the antagonists get to the speechless stage, barge in with some grossly ignorant suggestion: the sort of thing which you might get out of a popular Universal History of the World. It is wise to do this under an assumed name. For instance, when they are at shrieking point over Hannibal's passage of the Alps, suggest a third pass, and give some asinine reason for it. When one man is out for the Mont Genevre, and the other for the Little St. Bernard, take the Mont Cenis, and make it start from the wrong valley, saying at the same time that the Mont Cenis was open when the others were already blocked, and that you can see the plains of Italy quite clearly from it if you leave the road and climb up one of the foothills. Then the two boxing men will forget their quarrel in order to throw off their gloves and turn upon you and rend you with their views. It is no bad fun, after having led them on a little, to admit that you know nothing about it, and that you were only joining in a game because it seemed so exciting.

I did that once years ago, in the matter of an archæological discussion in my own country, and I laugh over the memory of it yet.

Along the Quays.

By RICHARD HAYES.

THEY may not unfold such enchanting vistas as the river-banks in Paris, though the critical Thackeray, eighty years ago, saw in our quaysides "no small resemblance to a view along the quays of the French Capital." We miss here many things that charm us there—the pleasure-boats, the fishermen, Notre Dame, the luminous air, the long shaded avenue of acacias and chestnuts. . . . Nor are there, perhaps, enshrined here such splendid traditions and high memories as sleep by the Seine-side. But for all that, these Dublin quaysides possess a picturesqueness and glamour and character of their own. Here a little stretch of beauty that lingers in the memory. There a bit of life and colour, vivid and local. Everywhere scattered vestiges and fragments of yesterdays which are our inheritance, and often stir us deeply with the memories they awaken.

For me, at any rate, our city has nowhere within her gates a walk of more varied delight than here along the river on whose banks she has been growing for more than a thousand years. I like to start out at the back of the big railway terminus where the river steals silently into the town, its rural beauties, already a little faded, still clinging to it. Here, amidst the clanking of trains and hissing of steam-engines, it parts with the peace and silences of its woodland stretches. The green glades where Iseult wandered have been left behind. Hedgerow and grassy bank are giving way before steep stonework sides and long grey battlements, and as its waters, no longer clear and virginal, flow under that bridge named after some English monarch, the last stage of the river's winding journey from hills to sea has begun. How pleasant to loiter here about its new environment near the busy wharf of the great brewery, watching the flat barges being loaded with their cargoes and move down the river to the big sea-going ships. Away to the west the wooded heights of the Park melt in the vaporous distance. From the other side extensive barracks, once a fortress of the stranger, look at you across the river. Behind them a historic prison—that Arbor Hill consecrated by many a patriot from the knight-errant Tone to that other knightly wanderer of our day, who, following the same gleam, trod his footsteps to the same high end. Stretching ahead is a far spacious vista—the river winding seawards under many bridges, flanked by a continuous line of houses, their long monotony broken by tapering spire or rounded dome.

Beyond the wharf you move down the quayside in the shadow of tall houses, gaunt and grey with time, their finely-carved doorways telling of faded splendour. There is one, standing apart, with long facade in a high-railed courtyard. Now the haunt of the poor, it was in its heyday

the city's most exquisitely decorated residence, "its very windows inlaid with mother-of-pearl." Passing by this evening I stop to look at it, and out of the dead years rises a vision of a May night of 1798. . . . Its brilliantly-lighted drawingrooms are merry with a festive gathering of the city's youth and fashion. Pamela FitzGerald is there in all her womanly beauty. Pensive and serious to-night, she has put aside her French joyousness . . . fears, forebodings cast their shadows about her soul. The lord and master she loves has been risking life and fortune in a gallant adventure . . . a thousand pounds upon his head. And even while she thinks of him, if only the revelry were less loud, she would hear through the night silence outside those pistol-shots over there in Thomas Street that will bring him death in Newgate Prison in a few days.

Away from the shadow of the houses and sad thoughts of the noble Geraldine, I move across the roadway to the parapet. Clusters of restless seagulls with harsh cries are swooping and wheeling in circles above the water. The pale gleams of the setting sun rest on the shell and tumbled masonry of the Four Courts, looking still majestic in its ruins. Sandalled and bareheaded, two Franciscans cross the bridge beside me, hurrying to their Friary, the long stone building with graceful front here on the quayside. After years of outlawry and proscription they have settled in this quiet house, centuries-old traditions of their Order in the poor lanes behind it.

Along here narrow picturesque streets slope down to the river, reminiscent in their mediæval atmosphere of bits of old French towns. Sleepy and silent now, they knew much of the wild life in that riotous Dublin of the eighteenth century, with its vampire foreign officialdom and planted landowning class. A time when, his native aristocracy beyond the seas, the Gael was a hunted outlaw in his own land. Driven underneath, spirit-broken, brooding . . . silent save for plaintive chant or lyrical cry. The wail of the Connacht exile :—

'Tis my grief that Padraic Loughlin is not Earl of Irral still,
And that Brian Duff no longer rules as Lord upon the Hill,
And that Colonel Hugh MacGrady should be lying dead and low,
And I sailing, sailing swiftly, from the County of Mayo.—

was echoed from a Munster valley by Egan O'Rahilly :

Now may we turn aside and dry our tears,
And comfort us and lay aside our fears,
For all is gone. . . . No thing
Remains to us of all that was our own.

And yet here on the quays how can one forget that this eighteenth-century Dublin, Irish at least in a generous extravagance, built along the river two great masterpieces in stone—both in ruins to-day !

Near a corner of one of these hilly little streets stood the theatre where "young Mr. Shelly, said to be from England," pleaded passionately for Ireland's freedom at a tumultuous meeting of Dublinmen a hundred

years ago. "I have walked through your streets," cried out the young poet amid their wild applause, "and seen a fane of Liberty converted into the Temple of Mammon." But he left our shores soon after, and Ireland knew him no more!

Much of what is most charming and delightful along the quaysides lies in that stretch from the Four Courts to O'Connell Bridge. None of a big city's hurry and bustle is there but an atmosphere of quiet leisure all day long. Those little shops of such wonderful variety begin to appear at the bases of the tall houses—dusty shops full of pictures and prints and books, old silver and glass and furniture, of curios and antiques of many kinds. And some of them are such a strange medley of all these. There opposite on the northern quayside is one I love to haunt. Books predominate, but there are in it, too, old pottery and old candlesticks, copper ornaments, Indian clubs, old prints, and on a shelf, presiding over all, looking down on the confused disorder is a plaster bust of the last Speaker of Grattan's Parliament. His facial expression a little marred, for, though he voted against the Union, the fact did not save his nose being swept away by a bullet in a recent street ambush!

Here is Grattan Bridge. I seldom pass it by but I think of a little green-covered book of my boyhood with its unforgettable portrait of The Last Gleeman, in which a great poet of our day tells of that poorer poet of another day—blind Zozimus from Faddle Alley, who used to stand at the corner of the bridge reciting his verses to an admiring crowd.

Of a forenoon with bright sunshine there is for an eye accustomed to the drab grey city streets, a wonderful riot of brilliant colouring in the row of houses along the northern quayline. And at close of day what a glamour descends on the river when a setting sun scatters golden light along its waters, bridge and parapet clothed in shining beauty, and later, when the light has waned, and long twilights, purple and violet, enfold it in mystery.

Verlaine and other poets of France have sung the beauties and magic of the Seine. Whistler, someone has said, has in his canvases created the Thames for most people. And the Liffey? When will poet appear here to sing its praises or painter to reveal a new beauty from its battlements?

O'Connell Bridge forms a distinct line of demarcation in the quaysides, the environment and character of the region lying east being in marked contrast to the western stretch. Looking seawards from its parapet, one has not kindly thoughts of those who blotted out a long vista of unique beauty by constructing a hideous bridge and railway viaduct across the line of vision. Of what sweet daily emotion have the Philistines deprived the thousands passing by!

A few minutes' walk leaves you amidst the busy traffic of the port. Flying the flags of many nations, ships lie along the riverside loading and unloading merchandise. Lorries and drays, lumbering waggons and

carts come and go with din and rattle on the rough-cobbled pavement. It is a rich feeding-ground for flocks of grey pigeons that peck familiarly about the roadway. And I seldom pass by but I see, drawn here by the mystery of the sea, small boys lingering about watching wistfully the big boats sail away to adventure and the unknown.

Shipping offices, old crumbling houses, factory sheds, line the quayside here, and in the middle of them, so strange in its environment, an ancient bookshop. You can read through its dusty and broken windows the titles of some of the quaint volumes within: *A Naval Dictionary in the English, Dutch, German, and Spanish Languages*; *Sea Drift*, by Admiral Robinson; *The Bagh O Bahar: A Translation: Printed at Calcutta*—an aroma of far-distant lands clinging to many of them.

Wandering on by the river, past the stores and warehouses, eating inns and drinking taverns, past quiet little streets of the poor, where sailors and sea-faring folk live, you come to the mouth of the Dodder. And near the quayside's further end, beyond the cottages and broken houses of the old fishing village, is a quiet place, remote and apart, where only the city's faint murmur reaches. Fishermen mend their nets there, and old sailors, in the winter of their days, idle dreamily along the river wall in the sunshine. A place of remembered joy, for I have seen here the gleam of beacon-light on the river, of flashing guardian-lamp on the bay. And I have lingered about it watching the dawn creep in from the sea as the white sails of a homing trawler unveiled slowly in the morning silence.

Conflict.

By FRANK GALLAGHER.

(From an unpublished manuscript called "*Fear; The Story of a Hunger Strike.*")

Saturday, April 10th, 1920.

. . . Yes, that is the Angelus. That wisp of sunlight will soon have climbed from ridge of bolts to ridge of bolts up the black door, and then . . . then it will be dark. . . . But nothing has happened. They said if we held out until Saturday we would have won; that men would go out on Saturday and that the rest would follow on Monday . . . they said that. But nobody has gone out and Saturday is gone. . . . They said they daren't let men die. . . . But men are dying . . .

Why is nobody singing in his cell? . . . Do they all think that . . . that now it must be death? . . . and such a queer death! . . .

What a silence there is! Yet it seems a silence full of mad conflict . . . the conflict of minds fighting out the struggle of life with death . . . with death that will go on for days and days. . . . If only I had left unsaid that thing about D——. It was so needless and bitter. . . . But why is nobody singing? . . . That is so strange. . . . It is dark now. . . . Ah! that deep-voiced man below is singing, not loudly, but the prison is so still. . . . Curse that warder and his new boots. . . . Ah, I hear him again now . . .

*"So all round me hat I wear a tri-coloured ribbon O;
All round me hat until death comes to me:
And if anybody's askin' why I'm wearin' that ribbon O,
Ye can tell them 'tis for love of him I never more shall see."*

Oh! I wish he wouldn't. . . . If sleep would only come to-night. . . . If thoughts would only stay away. . . . They said there would be releases on Saturday. . . . What if there were never any releases? . . .

"Ye can tell them 'tis for love of him I never more shall see."

Yes, I suppose they will sing that . . . I wonder where they will bury us? It will be funny all the coffins. . . . I must have these books sent back to B——. . . . If it were light I could read. . . . Christ, give me one hour's sleep. . . .

Sunday, April 11th, 1920.

. . . What's that?

The light fell fair into my eyes. . . . It was the man on the hourly round with his lantern. . . . At least he might take this night off. . . .

"Hallo!"

"What d'ye want?"

"What's the time, please?"

"Two o'clock."

"Oh! Lord."

. . . And the rubbered feet moved up the ward, halting at every door. The prisoners around me and below me I heard stirring. The night had begun for all of us again. . . . What a tragedy "regulations" can become! . . .

. . . Did you ever notice that the city clocks are all so pleasantly out of time that as they strike the quarters and halves and hours they take it up one after another like school-children singing a roundelay? After a little while you get to know this chime from that; and what the rôle of each is; and how he never misses it. You hear the domineering clocks on the big business houses trying to shout down the others. Yet it is always the sweet-voiced clocks that, half-heard though they be, stay ringing in the mind. . . . There is a humanity in clocks. . . .

Perhaps they meant next Saturday. . . . Yes, I now see that answer to P——. A man who is not always armed will arm himself when going on a "job"; nor will he think himself a coward for it. Where, then, the cowardice in a man going to death arming his soul for its job? He will understand that. His philosophy gives him no way of escape. Glad I thought of that. . . .

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I think I have been sleeping. With the day who cares? . . . Hunger-striking is simple after all. . . . Just fasting and no pain . . . no pain. . . . But the heart stops. That is the trouble. They say men have fasted for many days . . . but when they were dying they were free not to fast. We must be glad to die. I was . . . on Saturday. Now it seems so hopeless. . . . What do they care about a death, the brutes? . . .

. . . Yet it is for Ireland, for justice, for . . . for those who have not yet been taken that they may not have to do this . . . this horrible, unnatural thing. . . . But these are words and they mean nothing. . . . We are beaten. . . . I was ready to die, on Friday. . . . There was hope then. And now? . . . Now it is Sunday morning and we are caged in here panting and weak! . . . Pearse's death? . . . He had only a day to think of it. . . . It was a soldierly death. . . . It meant something. . . .

I suppose they will not know that we are dead until they open the cell doors in the morning. The doctors will have to make calculations in their little note-books to find out the exact hour. . . . Ha! Ha! . . . Aunt M—— . . . she will go mad. . . . No . . . It will be deeper than that . . .

Oh! God, let the daylight come. . . . This is the octave of Your resurrection. You came from the tomb. . . . Bring us from our tombs. . . . Tombs? . . . Yes, each cell is a tomb. . . . Mountjoy has become

a family vault. . . . Ha ! Ha ! . . . They can peer in and see us in them.
 . . . I suppose they will have a threepenny day for the poor . . .

I think I am going mad. . . . Four nights without sleep. . . . Six
 days without food. . . . Sounds like the beginning of one of Chesterton's
 poems . . .

Four nights without sleep . . .

Six days without food . . .

Four aeons without mercy . . .

Six kopeks a pood . . .

A nonsense rhyme ! . . . Belloc at his best ! . . . Six kopeks a pood.
 . . . That is the Russian touch suggesting the madness of Bolshevism
 to the anti-Bolshevik and the materialism of Czarism to the anti-Czarist.
 . . . Six kopeks a pood besides meaning nothing might well be the cry
 of a Czarist Chancellor about a tax or of a Soviet leader about cheap
 bread. . . . It has as much in it as any other world cry. . . . What is a
 kopek ? What is a pood ? . . . I think a kopek is a coin and a pood a
 weight. I don't know. It does not matter much now, at any rate. . . .

The clocks again, thank God. . . . One . . . Two . . . Three
 . . . Fo . . . Fo . . . Ah ! I missed it. . . . But here's that great
 dignified clock. . . . How long after the chime it strikes ! . . . Ah ! . . .
 One . . . Two . . . Three . . . Fo . . . Fo . . . *Three* o'clock. . . .
 Oh ! God . . . God, I will take all the sufferings of a generation on me
 to-morrow if I may sleep now. . . .

. . . . Perhaps by thinking of drowsy things . . . bees . . . sun-
 light . . . tall soft grass . . . the brilliant white wings of a butterfly
 . . . the beautiful blue wings . . . a dragon-fly over a murmuring
 summer stream . . . the shadow of an oak tree . . . a strange, blue
 lake getting darker and darker . . . as the twilight comes creeping over
 it . . . slowly . . . slowly . . . the trees on the wooded banks lose
 their trunks now . . . the woods are blurring too . . . they are purple
 now . . . they have lost their outline . . . they are falling into the soft
 darkening sky . . . they are only a shadow . . . a shadow . . . softly
 . . . deepening . . . a shad . . . ow . . . a . . .

"Halt ! Who goes there ?"

"Friend."

Ha ! Ha ! . . . Friend, indeed, of you, Guardian of Death. . . .

There is to be no sleep to-night. . . . Well . . . I accept that now.
 Must try to remember more clearly the essential things. . . . Men must
 die. That is obvious now. . . . Why should any object to being the
 first ? . . . It will be hard to be the first. . . . But, the others . . . it
 would be hard for them too . . .

Strange how the despair has passed entirely from me. . . . There
 may be a meaning in that. . . . Perhaps ? . . . Perhaps ? . . . but no,
 not on Sundays . . . they never do . . .

The Order of To-day—Build!

By LOUIE BENNETT.

A HEALTHY sign in the public attitude towards the housing problem in Dublin to-day is that interest tends to centre round the question: What houses can we build? rather than: What houses do we need? Hitherto, action has been stultified by the magnitude of the need, and we took refuge in talk instead of bricks. Now it looks as if the bricks might be given a turn, if we can avoid a deadlock on the subject of costs, wages, and economic rents. The need is so urgent, not only for the slum dwellers themselves, but for all Dubliners who desire health and prosperity, that it is no longer good economics to follow economic principles.

We are envisaging the possibility of building 1,000 or 1,500 working-class houses annually for an unspecified period. This is a small effort towards meeting a demand for 36,000 houses, but it is large enough to give a joyful sense of achievement. Unless, however, the citizens show themselves actively and resolutely sympathetic, we shall not achieve even so much. If we are to see our first 1,000 houses built within a year, and the plans for another 1,000 in the following year put into preparation simultaneously, public opinion must make itself felt in a very practical way. Housing enthusiasts must make a big push now, and then concentrate on a long campaign of education, propaganda, and practical experiments. But the question obtrudes: Will enthusiasm survive the complex difficulties surrounding the building problem itself, and the perversities and apathy of the human element concerned?

There are several factors in operation now which give promise of further development in the housing reform movement. Where religion and science are at one, we get a powerful impetus. The public conscience of Dublin is stirred on this slum problem; a sense of moral responsibility in regard to it is making itself felt amongst all classes, and with many individuals that uneasy sense becomes a religious necessity. The Rev. D. H. Hall, of the St. Barnabas Public Utility Society, has loomed up as a housing missionary of a peculiarly convincing type. Endowed with much practical ability, a talent for finance, and the zealous faith of an early Christian, he is translating his Christianity into working-class houses, and can hammer home his preaching with concrete examples. Other clergy are dealing with the subject from a different angle, necessarily less practical, but no less fervid. The moral fervour thus aroused is backed up by medical science. Public health is menaced in an overcrowded and unsanitary city the strength and vitality of the nation must be below the average, where the majority of the people are slum dwellers, therefore national prosperity is a vain hope until housing conditions are remedied. These are the platitudes medical scientists repeat again and again they are platitudes that offer life or death to the community to whom they are addressed. Dr. Dwyer, the City Commissioner, who has Dublin housing schemes in hand, has a chance to prove himself a sincere scientist and a

practical patriot. Let him throw a share of the responsibility for working-class houses on every citizen as part of his duty towards his neighbour, and as necessary a safeguard to his personal welfare as the Police or the Civic Guard. It is as essential to use civic compulsion in this matter as it would be in the case of a deadly epidemic.

Across the water industrialists have given a considerable impetus to housing reforms—in most cases quite frankly for utilitarian reasons. Employers who are studying the problems of industrial efficiency realise that they cannot get physically fit workers from slums, and they find it good business to see that their employees are properly housed. Here in Ireland we have hardly yet begun to think of industrial welfare as an essential step towards industrial efficiency, but some of our employers of labour begin to suspect that healthy homes may be necessary to ensure a supply of strong and energetic workers. There can be no lingering doubt on this point in the minds of those who have walked through some of Dublin's tenement streets between seven and eight a.m., and sensed the morning atmosphere in which Dublin workers emerge to a day's toil! The Irish employer's interest in housing will grow as industrial development proceeds on more scientific lines.

The last driving force towards reform that I have in mind will eventually prove, I think, to be the most powerful. Until now the working-class women have passively borne the discomforts of their houses. I doubt if they will continue so to bear them. There is a new spirit and a new knowledge at work amongst them. They begin to understand the value and force of organisation. The Suffrage Campaign left Irish working women untouched. But in recent years many of them have been organised for Trade Union and political purposes. The girls who have had such experience, will not forget them when they are running their own homes. They know that it was through their own organisation in the last ten years that a great raising of the standard of life amongst women workers has been gained. Wages are better; the conditions of work for women in factories and shops are immensely improved. The improvement is reflected in their character and intelligence individually. They are more self-respecting; they have considered opinions and ideas, and are learning to give them expression. They want something better from life than they have had hitherto, and they will find ways to get it. The question of housing is one of intense interest to them; it is a topic that never fails to arouse prolonged and keen discussion. Further, there are rumours of group combination in tenement or back lane to force some reform from landlord or public authority. These sporadic efforts are the heralds of a larger movement with a larger objective.

What ethics and science and industrialism may fail to achieve for housing, the women of the working class will ultimately win by methods of their own, impossible to forecast.

But we may reasonably hope that the energies of the women will be free to concentrate on quality rather than quantity in regard to houses.

The Handsome Stranger.

By J. C. LENEHAN.

"I'D give my soul to be even with that man," said George Fanning, gritting his teeth in helpless anger.

"You would?"

George wheeled round with a startled exclamation. He had never considered the possibility of being overheard, yet here was this richly-dressed stranger standing just beside him, an understanding smile on his well-shaped lips. George's surprise, however, did not drive away his anger.

"I'm not aware that it's any business of——"

"Of course, not," the handsome stranger interrupted, still smiling his fascinating smile. "But weren't you speaking to me?—something about being even with someone?"

"No, I wasn't speaking to you. I was angry, and, in the heat of the moment, I spoke my thoughts aloud, that's all."

"Same thing. But you say you *were* angry. That sounds as though you're not angry now. Don't you mean to put up a fight, then? You ought to. One can always get even if one only tries hard enough."

His voice, musical, distinct, sounded clear above the rumble and splash and clamour and clatter of the traffic-filled streets. Hundreds of busy feet hurried past these two on the pavement where they stood. But though they were in the midst of the crowd they were not of it. George felt as if he and the stranger stood on a lonely island, apart from all the world, yet looking on at all the world.

"It's about a woman, isn't it?" asked the handsome stranger, after a pregnant pause.

"Yes, it's about a woman."

"I knew it was. Where hate is there is always a woman—and where a woman is there is always hate. I'm not blaming the women, however, far from it. It isn't their fault. And they're useful—very useful."

Though he heard every word that fell from the stranger's lips, George Fanning seemed not to be listening. His eyes were gazing intently across the road to where a man and a woman stood, arm in arm, outside the window of a jeweller's shop.

"The woman and—the enemy," remarked the stranger, looking in the same direction. "The woman you've lost, and the enemy you'll lose your soul to be even with. You hate them, don't you?"

"I don't hate her . . . and I'm not sure that I hate him . . ."

"Look at her," said the stranger. "Look at her over there, her arm linked in the arm of the man who has robbed you of her. Is she not good to look upon? And had he not crossed your path, she would now

be leaning on your arm . . . choosing the ring, perhaps. Think of it, man, and don't tell me that you don't hate. A home of your own . . . a wife that you loved . . . the patter of children's feet and the babble of children's tongues. Those are the things for which you have longed. I know you've been longing, and hoping. Yet you say that you're not sure whether you hate him . . ."

The day was mild, yet George Fanning felt an icy shiver go through him. "You ought to hate him! . . . you ought!" The hissed words seemed to cut into his brain, into the very marrow of his bones. The roar and rattle of the traffic now appeared more far away than ever. But across the road the pair still stood outside the window, obviously unconscious of the attention they attracted.

The ice-cold feeling left George, and in its place, slowly at first, came a burning desire for revenge. His first outburst was only the madness of a moment's overmastering anger; but this, this was something enduring, deeper, more deadly. Nevertheless, because, in his way, he was just, George's better nature still strove to repel this foul thing that was taking possession of his soul.

"He didn't really rob me," he said. "He couldn't have robbed me of what I had never had. Nellie Boyd's love was never mine. I must be just to him in that. Nellie and I were just good friends, that's all." His better self urged him to say the words, yet, even while he spoke, something within him kept on telling him that he was wrong and a fool. It seemed quite natural to him, too, that he should thus recount his dearest secrets to this stranger, who was not a stranger. "I had hopes, though—high hopes. . . . Then he, John Russell, came along."

"That's just it." The stranger's pleasant smile was never absent from his handsome lips. "He came along. Then the woman gave him the love that ought to have been yours. A thousand times you've asked yourself the reason why, but you haven't succeeded in answering the question to your satisfaction. In every way you seem a better man than John Russell. Yet you have been discarded in his favour. But there is one explanation that has never occurred to you. Shall I tell you what it is?"

"Yes, tell me what it is."

"Some years ago," said the stranger, speaking very slowly, as if to give each word sufficient time to sink well in, "when you lived in another town, you played tricks with your employer's books—and money. The affair was hushed up and never became public, for reasons which you know. You thought that no one, except you and your employer, ever knew. But nothing remains hidden. Why has it never struck you that John Russell must have known . . . and told?"

A fiery something stabbed through George Fanning's brain. Something hot and overpowering, like a boiling liquid, surged within it. He shivered violently, but this time passion, and not cold, was the agent responsible.

"Impossible!" he cried, his voice rising almost to a shriek. Subconsciously, he observed several passers-by eye him curiously. "Impossible!" he repeated in a lower key. "He doesn't know. No one knows."

"I know. Remember that. But calm yourself. People are watching you. . . . Well? Don't you hate him even yet? If you don't, you deserve to lose the woman who, even at the beginning of time, was destined to be your fate. You'd give your soul for her? Then you ought to be ready to give your soul—really give it, and not in a few rash words—to be revenged on the man who has taken her from you."

George Fanning was now past thinking coherently. "Yes, I would give my soul for her!" he repeated passionately. But, remembering the stranger's warning, his voice was low, though heavily charged with the intense agony he felt. "And I'd freely give my soul to be even with him. I will be even with him! Hell—the devil himself will be powerless to prevent me."

"The devil won't try to prevent you. Now, because you're a man after my own heart, I will help you to your revenge. But the people around are growing curious. I must meet you some other time and tell you what you are to do. For the present, I'm satisfied to know that you are determined to fulfil the promise which you made when you called me. . . . Oh, I see they've gone."

George Fanning looked over towards the jeweller's window. The objects of his consuming love and his all-devouring hate had departed.

When he turned round he discovered that the handsome stranger had also taken his departure, without a word of farewell.

Later, on his way home, George wondered where the handsome stranger had acquired his knowledge. "And it's funny," he mused, "that he should think I called him. I didn't call anyone."

George, however, did not wonder very much. The thought that he would soon be revenged on the man who had robbed him of the girl he loved soon drove out all other thoughts. Had John Russell won through playing the game, he might have been able to forgive him, but to tell Nellie about the one shameful deed of his past was unspeakably vile, traitorous. Well, there was a certain way to deal with traitors. . . . The stranger would show him that way.

Early on the following evening he met Nellie alone. The racking headache he had experienced the previous day now came upon him with redoubled strength. He remembered that, according to the stranger, Nellie knew of his tampering with his employer's books, and despised him because of it. The thought lashed him to fury.

"What has Russell been telling you about me?" he demanded harshly.

Nellie stepped back a pace, surprise showing plainly in her wide-open eyes.

"Nothing, George," she answered, soothingly. She knew that he was hard hit, and fancied that she understood his mood. "He has never said anything about you, never said anything against you, at any rate. I don't know that he could; but if he could he wouldn't. He's not that kind. George, can't you be reasonable? I've told you often that I can never be more than your friend—and I'm afraid I can't be even that if you persist in worrying me. John's got my heart. Yes, you'd better hear it from my own lips. I'm sorry, sorry that you should want me so badly; but there are plenty of girls as good as I who ——"

"It's a lie!" George cried passionately, referring to the first part of her statement. "He has been talking, telling you things so as to turn you against me. But I will have my revenge. I will make him regret that he ever ——"

"Oh, I must go!" Nellie interrupted, frightened. "You are not yourself now. You've been—drinking." And she fled through the crowd, leaving him standing there mouthing terrible oaths.

Yet George Fanning had never been profane. . . .

"Thinks you've been drinking," remarked the handsome stranger, standing by his elbow. "Well, a drink's just the thing for a man in your state . . . several drinks. Spirits keep the fires burning . . ."

They went to the nearest public-house, where the stranger generously supplied George with spirits. George was unused to strong drink, and the fumes, mounting to his head, dulled what faculties he possessed and fanned the fires of hate into a fiercer flame. But, though the stranger kept on replenishing George's glass, no drink passed his own smiling lips.

"You've had enough now," said the stranger, at length. "It's time we discussed business. I promised to help you. I always help those who ask me. . . . Now, listen carefully."

The musical words that told him what he was to do fell softly, pleasantly, on George's keen, listening ears. The thing seemed easy of accomplishment, and his soul exulted in the thought that revenge would soon be his. Perhaps Nellie would be his, too; but, anyhow, revenge was the thing that mattered most at the moment.

"And don't forget the midnight express to the north," the stranger advised, when all details had been arranged. "I shall meet you on the way."

"I shan't forget the midnight express," George echoed.

"Remember, I shall meet you on the way."

In a vague, half-conscious way George became aware that the stranger was gone, and that the barmaid was regarding him with a peculiar expression on her powdered face. George laughed, though he couldn't have told why, as he lurched towards the door.

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The rain lashed down in drenching torrents, and the thunder crashed overhead. Lightning zig-zagged across the threatening face of the sky,

a warning of a power greater than man's. The devastating fury of the elements was shunned by puny humans, and the streets were deserted.

But crouched in a sheltering entry was one whose soul was in harmony with the raging elements. George Fanning exulted in the flash and the crash, the tumble and the spatter that kept all others indoors. His hand gripped firmly the haft of the knife which he held concealed beneath his dripping coat. For an hour he had waited, and John Russell was certain to pass soon. But, in passing the entry, he would pass out to the Great Beyond. George laughed a laugh that was harsh and startling even to his own ears.

Another quarter of an hour passed. The anger of the elements was abating. And so, too, were the fires of hate in George Fanning's soul. The drink was beginning to burn itself out, and doubt, like quenching water, was abating hate's consuming heat. Suppose John Russell went home some other way? Suppose he had never gone to the home of Nellie's parents that evening? But, then, the stranger had assured him that John would go, that he would return by this lonely street. And the stranger knew. . . .

Another fifteen minutes nearer to eternity! Somewhere, in the distance, a church clock chimed the half-hour. Half-past eleven! The stranger was wrong after all. John Russell would not come. It seemed useless to wait any longer.

"Patience!" said the stranger, gliding up on softly-shod feet. "Patience . . . and courage. He'll be here in a few minutes now. . . . Waiting for the rain to clear. . . . Better so. . . . Just time to catch the express. . . . No waiting about after it's done. . . ." And he glided softly on his way.

"Funny!" mused George. "A night like this . . . and he doesn't seem wet. . . ."

Heavy footfalls broke the silence that followed the passing away of the stranger. George Fanning peeped out cautiously.

Policemen! He drew well back, and the policemen tramped past his place of concealment.

More footsteps. Once more the man looked out, and this time, by the light of a distant lamp, he became aware that his enemy was approaching his merited doom.

Nearer came the footsteps . . . nearer. George Fanning braced himself while his brain rioted in the knowledge that the desired moment was at hand.

Ten yards away! . . . five . . . two . . . one! A lunge . . . a choking cry . . . a sickening thud. . . . Then silence, silence save for the mad clatter of George Fanning's feet as he raced away in terror from the ghastly thing lying on the rain-drenched pavement; raced away to catch the midnight express, horrible, mocking laughter following him all the way.

The doctor had just left, after declaring that John Russell's wound was serious, but not mortal.

"Another half-inch and all would have been over," he said. "As it was, had the police not heard his cry, well ——" And he shrugged his shoulders expressively.

The words were spoken to Nellie Boyd and her mother, for the police, knowing the wounded man and his freindship with the Boyds, had had him carried there, because the house was nearer than his own rooms.

John Russell's eyes were closed, and mother and daughter talked in whispers over the fire, for they thought he slept.

But John Russell was not asleep. He opened his eyes just in time to see George Fanning walk into the room. Behind him glided a well-dressed stranger, smiling pleasantly. George approached the bedside, bent over the wounded man.

"Lost," he said, and his voice held all the pain and all the sadness of all the ages. "I didn't kill you, but murder is on my soul, for the will is more than the deed. I said I'd give my soul. . . . Lost!"

He turned and walked towards the door, the handsome, smiling stranger close behind. As they reached the door, John's eyes caught sight of the feet of the stranger. They were like the feet of a goat.

Then John Russell called out, terrified, and the women rushed to his side.

"He's wandering in his mind," said the mother. "Pass me the sleeping-draught, dear."

That happened at one-fifty in the morning. At exactly one forty-nine George Fanning was glaring through the window of the flying midnight express, a hundred miles away. He was the only occupant of the compartment. Through the inky darkness outside he saw the handsome stranger beckon. George opened the door and jumped.

Book Reviews.

DISCOVERIES. J. Middleton Murry. W. Collins and Sons, Ltd., London.
7s. 6d. nett.

Mr. Murry takes for his motto the saying of Anatole France, that "criticism is the adventures of a man's soul among books." It is, therefore, a personal affair, and the highest and most real "discoveries" are only to be made by entering into communion with the master-spirits. The greatest literature must be concerned with the fundamental questionings and aspirations of humanity, and it is here that it comes very close to religion.

This book is divided into thirteen essays, of which seven deal with Poetry and the Drama, and the remaining six with the development of modern Prose Literature.

For Mr. Murry, Shakespeare is the supreme poet. His first essay, "The Nature of Poetry," is an endeavour to reconcile three definitions: that the impelling motive of great poetry is the "desire of the moth for the star"; that it "submits the shadows of things to the desires of the mind" (Bacon); that it is an "imitation of emotions and actions" (Aristotle). After subjecting the poetry of Shakespeare to these definitions, he arrives at the semi-mystical conclusion that in his greatest moments the poet had attained to the satisfaction of his longing for that which surely is, but is not here, and that he had, therefore, at certain times, an immediate intuition into the hidden nature of things.

Matthew Arnold became the victim of this restless desire and never reached the goal. He was

"Never by passion quite possessed,
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway.

The few moments of true intuition that Mr. Murry has been able to find in the poetry of the eighteenth century are drawn from the works of those poets who revolted from the "Age of Reason" and all its implications; in their time they were considered mad, like Christopher Smart, whose "Song to David" he rightly appraises. Smart was one of the "flies embedded in the pellucid amber of Boswell's Johnson," but the dizzy heights to which this fly could soar can only be realised by reading the "Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England." He was mad enough to dream that birds and flowers might be moved by a Divine allusion to them:—

And the lily smiles supremely,
Mentioned by the Lord on earth.

One would gather that Mr. Murry does not love the Formalists. "Prose!" he says. "There is no Prose. There is only the complete and coherent utterance of a man who feels and sees and thinks clearly, and who is convinced that his feeling and vision and thought is worth utterance." In "The Significance of Russian Literature," he points out that the great Russians, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Tchekhov, deal with problems of conduct which really arise from problems of belief; the question is not so much "what shall a man do?" as "what shall a man believe?" In another essay the break-up of the Novel is traced from the subsidence of the school of Flaubert to the attempt to represent the working of an individual consciousness begun by Marcel Proust and carried almost to an anti-climax by James Joyce. Here this particular rivulet sinks in the morass of super-intellectualism, but, according to Mr. Murry, the main stream flows on through Tchekhov and those writers who make us feel that their message comes from within; in prose, as in poetry, a direct and immediate intuition into reality.

The turbulence of modern life is reflected in modern literature. We are, it would seem, at the end of an epoch, and the unrest that is in life and in literature may be the stirring of a new birth. That is why this book of Mr. Murry's is welcome; his writing is serious and sincere, and a continual contradiction of his own statement that there is no "Prose."

S. O'R.

EARTHBOUND : Nine Stories of Ireland. By Dorothy Macardle. The Harrigan Press, Worcester, Mass., U.S.A. : The Empton Press, Dublin. 3s. 6d.

One puts down Dorothy Macardle's "Earthbound" with that bewildering sense of dissatisfied content which the just-great always compels. It is so good that one wishes it were perfect. Yet every story in it is powerful, at times overmastering. It is the sameness in the theme of all which gives the disappointment—the theme of the dead, earthbound, still playing a part in the world and the work of the living. We know that this sameness is intentional. But it is a fault in a book of short stories. To say this is not to lessen the value of Miss Macardle's work. "Earthbound" is too well done to be injured by criticism. It can stand the severe test of a frank review.

Of the nine stories, "Samhain," "By God's Mercy," and "De Profundis" seem to me to be the finest, "Samhain" especially, which is as perfect a short story as I know. Some of the others have passages equally great as the three named, but they are not so complete, so simple, so entirely unforced. Miss Macardle's finest effects—and such amazing effects—are got by an equally amazing simplicity of narrative. Sometimes she departs from this simplicity, never without loss. "The Portrait of Roisin Dhu" is an example. The story is that of an artist who in his ecstasy of painting drew from his model very life itself, producing a masterpiece and leaving a corpse. Somehow, although in the other stories the supernatural did not seem impossible—itself a proof of Miss Macardle's power—here it is unreal. The cause is not the theme, but the telling. A passage will illustrate what I find hard to put into my own words. Speaking of the artist's work it is said :

"To remember those paintings is like remembering a dream life spent with the Ever-living in an Ireland untrodden by man."

Of the artist's portrait of Roisin Dhu this is written :

"Had Blake seen, anywhere on earth, others were asking, that heart-breaking, entrancing face? Knowledge of the secrets of God was in the eyes; on the lips was the memory, the endurance, the fore-knowledge of endless pain; yet from the luminous, serene face shone out a beauty that made one crave for the spaces beyond death. No woman in the world, we said, had been Hugo's Roisin Dhu; no mortal face had troubled him when he painted that immortal dream—that ecstasy beyond fear, that splendour beyond anguish—that wild, sweet holiness of Ireland for which men die."

When Miss Macardle rhapsodises she rings false, to me at least. Here and there are words and little phrases of the same kind—tinsel on good stuff. But only in "The Portrait of Roisin Dhu" and "Niav" is it noticeable. On the other hand, there is the felicity of a hundred sentences and passages—indelible impressions given in a couple of words: "Donal looked at it and smiled; the way you'd smile at an enemy." "Dermot unlatched the door and came striding in—a man angry with his God." "I thought he had died until I saw his fingers move feebly along his rosary beads." "There were fox-gloves burning in the shadows." "In the evenings he would be exhausted and friendly and grateful like a child." "She cryed her hands together and said . . ." I spoiled my copy by marking them, they were so many.

Taken all in all "Earthbound" is a lovable book. It brings out the real things of this nation's people, its devotion, its suffering so proudly borne, its wisdom and spiritual insight. The Nine Stories are an antidote to that cynicism which is the fruit of the last three years. Miss Macardle has made a powerful contribution to the proper understanding of Ireland; her book is the basis of good history.

CECIL O'HANLON.

BRITISH WADERS. Illustrated in water-colour, with Descriptive Notes, by E. C. Arnold. Cambridge University Press. 1294. 70s. net.

In the making of many bird books there certainly is no end, yet from time to time a book is published which may be accepted as a welcome addition to the literature on this ever-popular subject. We have pleasure in noticing a work which seems to us to come into this category—it is Mr. E. C. Arnold's recently-published book dealing with the wading birds of these islands. Such birds as the Phalaropes, Sandpipers, Curlews, and Plover, to mention a few, that make their home on the sands, or in the marshes and estuaries of our coast; they have ever been attractive to the naturalist and the fowler.

The work is remarkable for the beautiful plates which have been reproduced from the author's water-colour drawings of wading birds as they were observed and sketched by him in their favourite haunts. These illustrations are of great merit, not only for artistic excellence but also for marked originality in displaying peculiar traits of the various species, a result of many years of careful observation in the field. As examples we would direct attention to the plates illustrating the Purple Sandpiper, Stone Curlew, and Common Sandpiper. Many of these birds, notably the Stilts, are very difficult subjects for the artist.

There is nothing pretentious about the text of this attractive book; the notes are written in an original and interesting way, differing from the style used in some books of this kind. The following quotation refers to a common resident on our coasts:—

“ Though the Ringed Plover is much more wary than the Dunlin and is the first of the small waders to decamp as you approach them on a mud-flat, yet it becomes quite daring at its breeding grounds, where it resorts to various devices to decoy one away from its eggs. I have known one cling to a shingle bank much as a Woodpecker to a tree. For long I could not discover why its numbers did not increase round Eastbourne at the same rate as those of the Redshank, but I have found that the young frequently fall victims to the prowling Herons. The young Redshank generally hides itself amongst the herbage, where it is more or less safe, but the young Plover instinctively trusts to protective colouration and crouches on the open shingle. This may well enable it to elude the human eye, but it is not good enough for the Heron, which pouches the youngsters without remorse.”

Especially will the reader find many practical hints on the identification of birds which are liable to be confused with one another and are so easily overlooked in the field. One regrets that the author did not give us many more of his experiences with the waders.

J. H.

THE ELECTRON. By Robert Andrews Millikan. University of Chicago Press. Price, two dollars.

The question whether matter is ultimately continuous or discontinuous has been with us from the time of the earliest Greek philosophers. It caused acute differences both in ancient and mediaeval times, often complicated and embittered by theological hatred; the atomists do not appear at any time to have been on the side of the angels. But many modern writers on physics and philosophy, including Professor Millikan, seem inclined to rate Democritus and Epicurus as intellectually far superior to Plato and Aristotle, simply because they held an atomic theory of matter. Aristotle, after all, taught Europe to think methodically, and Plato wrote philosophic works which are literature and not jargon. And if Democritus was an atomist, he does not seem (any more than most other Greeks) to have based his theory on observation or experiment; nor do his theoretic reasons show very high intelligence, being probably the same as those advanced by Lucretius. Besides, the modern atoms are

vastly different from the Democritean ones. The latter were hard and completely solid, with void and inert spaces between them. The former are made up of arrangements of points of electric concentration with continuous fields of electric force.

The experiments to establish that electric charge exists only in multiples of a definite minute amount, called the electron, are well described by Professor Millikan, and will probably become historical. But the Professor errs by a too liberal distribution, to himself and others, of bouquets that time will not spare. This immodest fashion is on the increase in scientific treatises, especially American ones.

However, the evidence in support of atomic concentration, not only of electricity, but also of energy, is excellently marshalled in this book. Only let the reader not forget a thing the writer is not prone to remind him of, namely, that modern atomism, like ancient, is only a hypothesis, that neither atoms nor electrons have been seen, nor ever will be, and that the photographs of the tracks of various particles are just photographs of condensations of water vapour with positive or negative charge. And it still remains a mystery how small bundles of positive or negative electricity remain together, in spite of the law of repulsion between similar charges; and also how the definite quanta of radiated energy can be reconciled with the well-established undulatory nature of all kinds of radiation. The subject is full of uncertainties and antinomies, and none can dogmatise about it; that in itself would be an attraction if scientific authors would carefully draw the line between fact and supposition, and give their readers a chance of judging for themselves.

P. BROWNE.

ANTHOLOGIE POÉTIQUE FRANÇAISE, XVI^e siècle, 2 vols; XVII^e siècle, 2 vols.; XVIII^e siècle, 1 vol. Par Maurice Allem. Paris, Garnier frères. No date. Each volume, 6 fr. 90.

This is by far the best anthology of French poetry that has seen the light. It is entirely adequate and accurate as far as it has been published, and admirably equipped with careful notices. The XIXth and XXth century volumes are promised, but not yet issued. Where all is so perfect and so complete, I can only refer to one or two of the chief respects in which M. Allem's work surpasses all its predecessors. It is not a garland of purple passages, a *florilgium* of merely individual preferences, but a scholarly companion to the history of French poetry, all the phases and currents of which it illustrates significantly and with unflinching discrimination and critical aptitude. There is no solitary exception. Every poet of any consequence in and for himself or on account of his place in the development of his craft in France that I have looked for I have found. The XVIth Century is no longer merely the "Pléiade" with a few of Malherbe's pet aversions tacked on at the end. Here we have Le Maire de Belges, the first voice of the Renaissance, at the forefront of the book. We have Mellin de Saint-Gelais, Ronsard's first rival; Marguerite Queen of Navarre, round whom all Platonism centres; Antoine Heroët, Clément Marot of course, Bonaventure des Périers, Hugues Salel, Jean Dorat, Ronsard's master; the great school of Lyons—Maurice Scève, Pernette du Guillet, Pontus de Tyard (whom M. Paul Valéry found worthy, recently, of one of his rare articles; Louise Labé, the greatest of all woman poets between Sappho and H. D.; Guillaume des Autels; Ronsard and du Bellay and their school, naturally, and a host of others, including Du Bartas, Desportes, and d'Aubigné, as in duty bound, but also Tahureau and Tabourot and Pierre de Brach and Guy du Faur de Pibrac. The XVIth century

volumes end with the first of the Precious School, Gilles Durant de la Bergerie, and that neglected religious poet, J. B. Chassignet. The outstanding merit of the XVIIth century volumes is the justice done, now at last, to this same Precious School, so consistently neglected up till now, in spite of the psychological subtlety, the feeling for the beauty of natural objects and the moods induced by them, and the religious sensibility of the very modern poets of this group. If the poet's function is, like that of the musician, but in the more refractory, because more denotative, medium of words, to render moods—"la transmission totale d'un état d'âme," as M. Jules de Gaulthier has put it, and as Marcel Proust in his prose has so magisterially succeeded in doing—then no period before the XIXth century is so poetic, in the truest sense, as those despised first thirty years of the XVIIth century. It is true that the expression is overlaid, in most cases, with the conceits and "pointes" of excessive abambification. Subtle moods are rendered in excessively subtilized metaphors. The matter, doubly or trebly refined, has found a doubly or trebly distilled manner. But this preciousness, apparently often merely verbal, of manner, is not fundamentally verbal; rather does the expression form a symbol of the mood, and induce an emotional reaction in the reader corresponding to the nervous sensibility of the poet. The expression follows the thought, not, as is so often the case, the thought the expression. Unlike all other modern anthologists, M. Allem gives due weight to these poets of Preciosity. The greatest of them all, Pierre Motin, is there; Sigognes, Berthelot, Laugier de Porchères, Etienne Durand who was broken on the wheel, Pierre de Marbeuf, Pyrad de la Mirande are not omitted. The satirists, too, are well represented, and also such neglected but interesting poets as Boisrobert, Desmarests de Saint-Sorlin, Malleville, Des Barreaux, Gomberville, Dalibray, Tristan l'Hermite, Le Moyne, Godeau, the great Brébeuf, Montreuil, famous for the finest song of the XVIIth century *C'est un amant, ouvrez la porte . . .*) René le Pays of Grenoble, Claude Le Petit, burnt at the stake, the lyric Madame Deshoulières, Dufresny, the King's cousin, as well as all those we should naturally expect and a hundred others.

The XVIIIth century is treated with equal fulness. It was the century of the "badin," of the poets of Versailles and the Court, of the poets of nature who took their cue from Rousseau, of a hundred fabulists. Of course, M. Allem gives proper place to the great, but he neglects none. The fabulists are extraordinarily well represented. The "badin" finds due space. The pompous makers of Odes are there. The exquisite and dainty Cardinal Bernis rubs shoulders with Gentil-Bernard, Saint-Lambert with Delille and Roucher. Léonard and Bertin and Parny are included.

I have no reserves to make. M. Maurice Allem has produced a piece of work which leaves no loophole for criticism, which is, in its kind, absolutely "définitif," unsurpassable, final, the last possible word in anthologies.

The habit of some French publishers of not dating their title-pages is to be regretted.

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.

FRENCH POEMS OF TO-DAY. An Anthology compiled by de V. Payen-Payne and Isabelle H. Clarke, M.A. (Dublin). Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd. 1924. Pp. xvi. + 240. 5s. net.

This little anthology illustrates the work of the poetical schools in France from Leconte de Lisle to the present day. There are examples of the work of most poets of importance, and of a few of none, with short notices, often inadequate, on each. The most conspicuous absences are those of Jean Lahor

(Henri Cazalis), a somewhat neglected Parnassian; of the Abbé Louis le Cardonnel, who has recently been awarded the Lasserre prize, and is the finest purely religious poet of contemporary France; and, among the "jeunes," M. Pierre Jean Jouve, one of the most remarkable of the Unanimists, and Paul Jean Toulet, the chief of the "fastaisistes." On the other hand, it would seem that space has been wasted on such insignificant writers as Manuel, Theuriet, Pailleron, Déroulède, Fabié, Normand, Aicard, Haraucourt, Rameau, Jamin, Gregh, Porché and Rosemond Gérard. As instances of peculiarly inadequate notices, we may mention those on Arthur Rimbaud, M. Gustave Kahn (*Le Livre d'Images* is not mentioned), M. Henri de Régnier (bibliography quite inadequate), M. André Gide (bibliography totally inadequate, verse not distinguished from prose).

As for the introduction, is it not about time that the old myth, that Mallarmé's school was "known as *les Symbolistes*, and, by its opponents, as *les Décadents*," was exploded? These were, in reality, two at bottom quite distinct and even opposed groups in the poetic movement of the eighties. Moreover, it would be well to realise that Verlaine and Mallarmé had nothing in common: Verlaine and the poets who spring from him, such as Stuart Merrill and even M. Henri de Régnier, were Impressionists, like M. Claude Monet, not really Symbolists at all. But I know of no critic who has made this quite necessary distinction.

But the book is useful and supplies a want, and will be found excellent for school use and also for the general reader. There is nothing like it published in England, and the corresponding French anthologies, if more adequate, are very much more unwieldy and less suitable for teaching purposes.

T. B. R.-B.

THE FLAMING WHEEL. By St. John Whitty. The Talbot Press.
5s. nett.

By the death of Miss St. John Whitty, Ireland most certainly lost a writer who would have attained as distinguished a place in this country as Richard Jefferies has gained in England. The accurate observation, the almost magical felicity of expression and description which we associate with the writer of *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *The Amateur Poacher* are here, and in addition to these is that one great gift which was denied to Jefferies—the gift of humour. And a very exquisite humour it is, too, that illuminates every page of *The Flaming Wheel*, so delicate as to be almost imperceptibly interwoven in the finely-wrought phrases in which so much wisdom is skilfully conveyed.

"A big Red Admiral is an amusing fellow to watch when he has decided which dinner table to honour with his presence. In the garden just now (August) it is generally the Michaelmas daisies or golden rod which find favour in his eyes, and he alights with an air which signifies to all small fry whom it may concern that royalty has appeared, and it behoves them to depart from the presence at best speed. Occasionally a fly or a bee approaches, but the moment it alights the royal wings give a petulant flap, and the intruder leaves hurriedly. Sometimes he alights on a bunch of ivy blossom, already covered with small insects of different kinds. They appear to be dazed and intoxicated with honey, and it requires several very rapid flaps before their bemused faculties are sufficiently alert to warn them that they must depart."

Anyone who has ever watched the Red Admiral, most stately of our Irish butterflies, will recognise the accuracy of that description.

Or again, in different vein: "It's an old road is the mountainy road, and it

has learned well the fine art of compromise, so needful to those who live in times and places of difficulty, for it runs with the nicest adjustment between the valley and the hill, roving now a little up the slope and now a little down the hollow, so that no one can rightly say which it loves best. Nor is it of a tiresome business-like character, insisting on arriving at some given point by the most direct route. If the boulders block its path it goes cheerfully half a mile round them, and no one a penny the worse for it."

Here is a description of a January evening: "The whistling of the widgeon fills all the air with soft 'whee-ohs,' as the setting sun turns the waters and banks to gold. Even the red-shanks are quiet, and stand in companies with their beaks all one way. Green plover paddle delicately in the shallows, and raise their crested heads every now and then to gaze into the eye of the sun. Here and there a heron stands gazing at its own reflection, a long shadow trembling away from it. The sun gathers up its gold and disappears behind the headland; gradually darkness falls, and only the whistling of the duck tells of their whereabouts. A little flock of ringed plover flit by like ghosts, and a rising wind carries with it an ominous moaning from the sea. The curlew are calling uneasily. The storm is coming."

Richard Jefferies has given us nothing more perfect than that, and it would be easy to select dozens of such passages at random from these enchanting pages. The short memoir of the author prefixed to the book tells us of a very beautiful life, brimmed up with love for the things of nature and for her country. To those who knew her best in later years the two ruling motives of her life seemed to be the artistic passionate craving to interpret beauty, whether by pen or pencil or the sculptor's tools, and the intense inarticulate love for her own country and longing for the fulfilment of the highest ideal, for its perfect development that has broken so many Irish hearts. Miss Whitty will be gratefully remembered by many for her unselfish life and for her work in connection with the Bray Technical School, with the "United Irishwomen," and many other things of the kind, but I fancy that her greatest claim to the respect and love of her fellow-countrymen will rest on this beautiful book of her communing with nature, this last gift which has, as it were, been handed to us from beyond the grave.

FEW, BUT ROSES. Poems from the French. Selected and arranged by Alfred Brickell. T. Fisher Unwin. 6s.

When Mr. Brickell in his preface tells us that "the compilation of a comprehensive anthology of translation into English of poems from the French is beset with difficulties," we agree with him very heartily, but not when he proceeds to say that of those difficulties "copyright is naturally the greatest." The real crux of the task is quite a different thing, and Mr. Brickell himself touches on it when he says: "I consider the poem the more successful the less it betrays that it is a translation."

To transmute, to convey by transmuting, not translating the idea, the mood, the feeling of the original thought, temperament, music—that is the beginning and end of the translator's art.

To make it give forth "of the violet and not of the midnight oil," as Mr. Gosse has said of Cory's exquisite Heraclitus, that is certainly our only justification for transplanting from a language other than our own.

This little book in its 80 pages covers a fairly wide field, from what is rather vaguely named "mediaeval Norman" to poems of the present day.

Certain poems seem to have an almost magnetic attraction for the trans-

lator, and another of Mr. Brickell's difficulties must have been that of selection. Many fine alternatives of the translations here given occur to me as I look through the pages of the book, but I refrain from that easiest mode of criticism, and prefer to thank the editor for the "rescuing of some fine things" rather than blame him for those omissions which are almost inevitable in a collection of this kind. S.

TÓRUIGEACHT GRUAÍDE GRIANSOLOS. Sísile Ní Rataille do cuir
i n-eagar. Cumann na Scríbeann Gaeilge (Irish Texts Society).

Scéal fiannairdeacta iseaó é seo, má's ceart an teiriol do tabairt ar eactraib ná bainneann, mar is gnáthac dóib, leis an bfeinn, ac leis an gcraoib Ruaid. Ba mó ar fad réim na Craoibe Ruaidé i "n-aois órda na héireann," mar gheall ar fórlámas Cúige Ulaio sul a dtáinig na Gaeil go héirinn; uir ar n-uir, améac, mar atá minighe ag Eoin Mac Néill i réamrád Duanaire Finn, do cuair ceannas liriúdeacta do scéaltaib na féinne, do préamuis ó aiteac-tuataib ní b'isle. D'iaó san ba mó aic-inniseaó sa meadóon-aois, agus is leo ba mó fuaigeaó eactraí iasacta ó'n mBreatain, ó Roinn na hEorpa, ó'n Laidean agus ó'n nGheigis.

Tá an malairt céana le peicsint sa scéal so i dtaobh Cúculainn, agus is fiú spéis do cur ann mar gheall air sin; ina teannta san, éinne go bfuil Gaeilge ar n-aimsire aige, is féidir leis é do léigean. Do rinneaó an malairtiú le móir-clisteact i n-aon cás amáin—an fathac Neactan, mac na Talman, macsamail d' Antaeus nár mór d' Earcuil a scaramaint ó'n d-talam le n-a táctac, meallann Cúculainn istead san uisce é, agus marbuiqeann leis an nGa Bulga. Tá a lán cómpocal binn so-labarta sa scríobinn go bpoignóac do'n Gaeilge a gcur i n-úsáio airis. Is maic an réamrád atá scríobta ag Ingean Uí Rataille; is maic an t-aistriú, preisin, cé go dtéirdeann sé amú, dar liom, i bpoelaib annso agus annsú. Is sár-álúinn an abairt sin, grinneall grianaic (*sunlit gravel* pé'n abainn), agus aistrighear go *bottom gravel* i. Cló Rómánaic atá sa téacs, rud a cuirfeas diombáio ar a lán gur tairneamaic leo an cló Gaedelaic do bíó i leabrait an Cumainn.

pÁORAIG DE BRÚN.

THE PASSING OF THE PHANTOMS. By C. J. Patten, M.A.
Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 2s. 6d. net

This is a little dry book written by a Professor of Anatomy, the sub-title of which is "A Study of Evolutionary Psychology and Morals." The author does not think highly of Christianity because its tenets are so little backed by reason, which is the basis of his life. And yet he admits Christianity has evolved from primeval superstition. Is evolution at fault, then, in evolving so unsatisfactory a thing as Christianity? For a scientist he seems very old-fashioned. He does not evince a gleam of that modern scientific thought which is beginning to suspect that the constitution of the visible physical universe is beyond the scope of man's reason. Big scientific minds awaken wonder, awe, even love, in their readers. Little ones only sterilize.